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Mapping Middle-earth: Tracing Environmental and Political Narratives in the Literary Geographies and Cartographies of J.R.R Tolkien's Legendarium

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Abstract

In 1954, shortly before the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, J.R.R. Tolkien wrote to friend and author Naomi Mitchison, “I wisely started with a map, and made the story fit” (*Letters* 177). This reciprocal relationship between map and story is integral to understanding broader narratives about the interaction between humans and their environment in Tolkien’s legendarium. Tolkien’s corpus of maps acts as far more than paratextual material for the external reader’s understanding of the narrative; rather, it indicates a subcreated tradition of cartography that articulates particular power dynamics between the map maker, the map reader, and what is being mapped, that are expressed both through the maps and in the wider legendarium. Tolkien positions cartography as an inherently political act that embodies a desire for totalising understanding and control of its subject matter; this problematizing of external control then enables a critique of harmful contemporary engagements with land that intersect with but also move beyond cartography, namely environmental damage, human-induced geological change, and the natural and bodily costs of political violence and imperialism. Using historical, ecocritical, and postcolonial frameworks, this thesis argues that Tolkien employs particular generic characteristics such as medievalism, fantasy, and the interplay between image and text, in order to highlight and at times even correct his contemporary socio-political context and its destructive relationship with the wider world, through both narrative and cartographic expression.

Lay summary

This thesis examines the ways in which the maps included in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937), *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55) and the posthumously published *The Silmarillion* (1977), *The History of Middle-earth* (1983-96), and *Unfinished Tales* (1980) act as a means of exploring power dynamics surrounding land in his writing. Using a critical cartographic framework that positions cartography as an inherently political practice that is inextricable from exercises of power, I explore how Tolkien's fictional maps can be read as expressions of this power, and how they speak to and critique broader problematic engagements with land, including environmental damage, human interference in natural temporalities, and imperialism. By demonstrating how he engages with these issues, I intend to position Tolkien as an author who responded to his contemporary socio-political climate, and whose work intersects with fundamental theoretical fields.

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Behind the hill is sorcery

And everything unknown

- “The Going From a World We Know”, Emily Dickinson (663)

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Introduction

Section I: Introduction

Twelve years after its initial publication, Robert Louis Stevenson recalled how he came to write *Treasure Island* (1882), the novel that had propelled him to fame. As with his fictional hero Jim Hawkins, who discovered a treasure map in a pirate's chest and was thrust onto a path of adventure and intrigue, for Stevenson too it began with a map. Convalescing at a cottage in Aberdeenshire after a short illness, Stevenson recollects playing with his landlady's artistically minded young son, creating a small picture gallery out of paper and ink and watercolours. Largely taking on the role of museum guide, Stevenson would on occasion contribute his own creative endeavours to the collection: it was on one of these occasions that he drew an "elaborately and…beautifully colored" map that he subsequently labelled "Treasure Island" (5). Stevenson describes how, while gazing at the map, suddenly "the future characters of the book began to appear there visibly among imaginary woods; and their brown faces and bright weapons peeped out upon me from unexpected quarters, as they passed to and fro, fighting, and hunting treasure, on these few square inches of a flat projection", adventures that Stevenson hastily put to paper (5–6). Even after *Treasure Island* emerged as a complete novel, the map remained Stevenson's focal point for both the story and its history; attempting to explain the crucial connection between the map and the

narrative, Stevenson advises every author "in the beginning to provide a map", explaining "I have said the map was the most of the plot. I might almost say it was the whole…The tale has a root there; it grows in that soil; it has a spine of its own being…" (10–11).

For the reader of J.R.R. Tolkien, the story also frequently starts, and very often even ends, with a map. His novels *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55) are bookended by cartographic prints depicting different parts of the geography and topography of Middle-earth, drawn by himself and his son Christopher Tolkien. Moreover, Tolkien's "Silmarillion" writings, unpublished in his lifetime and subsequently edited and published by Christopher as the redrafted *The Silmarillion* (1977), the twelve volumes of *The History of Middle-earth* (1983-96), and the collected *Unfinished Tales* (1980), feature sketch maps and elaborate charts depicting the various lands of Middle-earth and the broader sub-created world of Arda in previous, mythological Ages. These maps have primarily been understood as paratextual devices; Ricardo Padrón argues that

> [t]hey pull us down to earth (to Middle-earth, that is), inviting us to consider the landscape from the perspective of someone traveling through it. We follow the road through the forests across the mountains, along the rivers, sometimes tracing the paths of Frodo and the others, and sometimes forging our own way… (274)

highlighting the ways in which the maps facilitate the reader's visualisation of both the fictional geography and the narrative trajectory. Yet these maps also

have a further, crucial function that has been largely critically neglected. Much as Stevenson considered the map the whole of the plot, and as the catalyst that allowed the narrative to germinate, Tolkien's maps too play a central role within the narrative of the texts themselves, working as examples of a broader fictional cartographic practice that contributes to the social, cultural, and political character of the sub-created world. Crucially, Tolkien's maps extend far beyond objects intended merely to ease the external reader's understanding of the narrative; rather, they indicate a sub-created tradition of cartography that articulates particular relationships between the map maker, the map reader, and what is being mapped, which are expressed both through the physical maps and in the wider legendarium.

Tolkien was of course conscious of his maps as an illustrative complement to the text: in a 1954 letter to author and friend Naomi Mitchison, shortly before the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien mirrors Stevenson's sentiments, explaining "I wisely started with a map, and made the story fit (generally with meticulous care for distances). The other way about lands one in confusions and impossibilities…" (*Letters* 177). However, although Tolkien is referring here to the paratextual function of the map and his desire to have it accurately represent the events of the novel, the reciprocal relationship that he highlights between map and story is integral to understanding how his cartography also tessellates with broader narratives in the legendarium that centre on the connection between humans and the wider world. In as much as

the story is made to fit the map, the map also fits the story, enabling it to speak to these wider thematic concerns and the relationships between the mapper and the mapped. Specifically, I argue that these relationships frequently embody power dynamics that are inherent between people and their surroundings – focusing on environmental damage, temporal and spatial control of land, political conflict, and imperialist violence – and that are notably inextricable from the act of cartography itself. It is therefore essential to understand these maps within a broader tradition of political and politicised cartography, as has been theorised by critical cartographers such as J.B. Harley, Denis Wood, and John Fels, who position maps as socially constructed texts that can be employed and deployed as a tool of power. Although they are stylistically, conceptually, and functionally varied objects, what unites Tolkien's maps is their adjacency to these exercises of power within the narratives, both as expressions and actants of these exercises. Tolkien's fictional cartography thus has a key hermeneutic role in investigating these narratives of power, yet significantly, it also acts as a self-reflexive consideration of the inherent politics of mapping. This is the central concern of this thesis: I intend to demonstrate how Tolkien's maps are both representative and productive of exercises of power, and how they demonstrate a pervasive and inescapable pattern of domination that is intrinsic to cartography and – more widely – to human relationships with their surroundings.

This study therefore intends to move on from the critical characterisation of Tolkien's Middle-earth maps as illustrative or paratextual devices, and instead examine them as material examples of a broader tradition of fictional cartography that is embedded within his sub-creation, and that intersects with numerous political issues in the text. I will argue that Tolkien positions cartography as an inherently political act that embodies a desire for totalising understanding and control of its subject matter; this problematizing of external control then enables a critique of other harmful contemporary engagements with land that manifest in but also move beyond cartography, specifically the environmental damage caused by industrialisation; the tension between human and non-human temporalities catalysed by the discovery of deep time; and the ecological and bodily costs of political violence and imperialism, brought into extreme relief by the activities of the British Empire. The intention is to place Tolkien within an explicitly contemporary and theoretical context from which he has hitherto been largely excluded; each chapter therefore engages with ecocritical and postcolonial frameworks (as will be discussed in greater detail below), as well as with geographical and cartographic theory that enables a rigorous consideration of the politics of space within Tolkien's sub-creation. As each chapter is thematically distinct, theoretical frameworks will largely be set up at the start of each individual chapter; instead, this introduction intends to unpack the broader conceptualisation of literary cartography, and to demonstrate the ways in which positioning Tolkien's maps

as diagetic devices that ought to be read through an explicitly cartographic lens has critical significance.

The diagetic nature of Tolkien's maps is not to be assumed, given how they are frequently read through a paratextual lens by Padrón and others, discussed below. Of the full cartographic corpus, only one is explicitly a diagetic map: Thror's Map (see Image Appendix, fig. 1) from *The Hobbit*, which the dwarves use to locate and enter the Lonely Mountain, is both a textual object within the narrative itself, read and interpreted by Thorin's Company, and an external reader-oriented device, originally included as *The Hobbit*'s endpaper. However, I argue there is definitive justification to consider all of Tolkien's Middle-earth maps as products of an internal cartography, which consequently frames them as tools of power for the cultures that produce them within the text. Stefan Ekman points out that the placement of "A Part of the Shire" (see Image Appendix, fig. 2) in between the Prologue and the first chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*, and thus in the middle of the narrative, means that "rather than providing a paratextual threshold, it is evidently part of the narrative document" (Ekman, *Here Be Dragons* 38).[1] In the context of Tolkien's

[1] Prologues themselves are of course frequently considered paratextual devices; Gerard Genette groups prologues along with other preambulatory remarks such as introductions and avant-propos under the term "preface", and argues that they are all types of paratext (Genette 161). Ekman does not explore this distinction; however, Tolkien's Prologue clearly situates itself within the wider conceit of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* as an edited version of Bilbo's Red Book of Westmarch, explaining in the first paragraph: "Further information will also be found in the selection from the Red Book of Westmarch that has already been published" (*Fellowship* 1). Although the prologue is physically separated from the main narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*, its engagement with this conceit means it participates in the narrative more so than a typical prologue. It also follows that material that appears after it, such as "A Part of

extended conceit that *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* are edited texts sourced from Bilbo's Red Book of Westmarch, Ekman posits that Tolkien frames the map as another artefact from the Red Book of Westmarch, making it a diagetic map which would have been created in Middle-earth and used by the characters. This argument can then be extended to the other maps that appear within the legendarium. As Tolkien consistently frames these texts as "found" narratives which he has simply translated and edited, these other maps can also be read as reproductions of Middle-earth's cartography found in the Red Book of Westmarch; that is to say, he is "redrawing" the maps for a contemporary reader just as he is "translating" the contents of the book from Westron into English.

Starting from the assumption that these maps can be understood diagetically, this introduction will firstly define power and political cartography through an examination of Michel Foucault's conceptualisation of power, and the ways in which it has been adopted within the theory of critical cartographers such as Harley, Wood, and Robert Kitchin. I will then give an overview of the various critical considerations of literary cartography, focusing on those who are interested in authorially-produced material maps, including Padrón, Ekman, and Mark J. Wolf; those such as Franco Moretti and Robert Tally who define literary cartography as a methodological approach independent of the

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the Shire", also engages with this conceit, and – as Ekman argues – is not excluded entirely from the narrative.

presence of fictional maps; and geographers such as David Cooper, Keith D. Lilley, and Andrew Thacker, who advocate for an explicitly cartographic framework in literary studies that engages with the political nuances of mapping, which forms the basis of my own approach. Through a survey of the current state of Tolkien scholarship, which I argue has a tendency to remain largely historicist, generic, and apolitical, I intend to demonstrate the necessity of engaging with frameworks such as critical cartography, in order to emphasise the ways in which Tolkien's texts can be read as politically rich and critical writing that is the product of his contemporary culture's anxieties, and that is relevant to our present theoretical concerns.

Section II: Power and cartography

My understanding of power is primarily a Foucauldian one, in which power is defined as "forms of domination [and]…subjection…which have their own ways of functioning, their own procedure and technique" ('Power' 156). Foucault emphasises that these forms of domination do not necessarily manifest as legislation or prohibition, arguing that Western societies have mostly conceptualised power in a negative, restricted way. Instead, Foucault claims, power needs to be understood heterogeneously: rather than an abstract concept of "power", it is necessary to conceptualise "powers" that are produced within specific historical and geographical contexts, powers that are in turn "producers of an efficiency, an aptitude, producers of a product"

('Power' 157). Tally categorises Foucault's theory of power as "pervasive, capillary, and productive" (123), which draws appropriate attention to the ways in which Foucault perceived these exercises of power as entrenched throughout social and cultural practices.

This totalising presence of power is made evident in Foucault's examination of power/knowledge relations in historiography and sexuality. Mark Poster argues that Foucault sees history as a "means of controlling and domesticating the past in the form of knowing it" (119): this is discussed in *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), where Foucault critiques the historian's inability to view the past as discontinuous to the present. Instead, Foucault says, the historian explains and recreates the past in relation to the present; the authority produced through this discourse gives the historian power not only over how the past is represented but also over how the present is configured. As Foucault explains:

> Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject: the guarantee that everything that has eluded him may be restored to him; the certainty that time will disperse nothing without restoring it in a reconstituted unity; the promise that one day the subject – in the form of historical consciousness – will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that are kept at a distance by difference, and find in them what might be called his abode… (*Archaeology* 13)

This approach therefore centres the historian within the production of history, creating a historical epistemology that is inextricably bound up in the power of its producer. This relationship between the production of knowledge and the

production of power is also discussed in *The History of Sexuality* (1976), through the act of confession. Foucault argues that "Western societies have established the confession as one of the main rituals we rely on for the production of truth" (*Sexuality* 58), with sexual preference and activity becoming a particularly "privileged theme of confession" (*Sexuality* 61). Beginning with the confessional of the Catholic Church, Foucault illustrates how the impetus to confess the sexual self has permeated beyond the religious, manifesting in relationships between parents and children, medical professionals and patients, and teachers and students. These acts of confession encapsulate the ways in which knowledge is appropriated for power: the confessor reveals the truth about their sexuality and in doing so communicates knowledge, which is then categorised, administered, and controlled by the listener, creating a framework of power. Both examples – Foucault's examination of historiography and his study of the confessional – thus encapsulate his conceptualisation of power as heterogenous: each is dependent on particular historical and social contexts, yet both demonstrate the pervasive relationship between knowledge and power that characterises society.

Crucially, Foucault also examines this relationship in matters of space. Much of Foucault's work was concerned with the ways in which power is deployed spatially, to the extent that Gilles Deleuze, in his review of *Discipline and Punish* (1977), christened Foucault the "new cartographer" of social spaces

(qtd. in Tally 120). Tally argues that in Foucault's earliest work *Madness and Civilisation* (1964), he demonstrates how the birth of the modern mental asylum was "part of a powerful and nuanced centralization, classification, and organisation of space" (124), in which individuals were categorised, medicalised, and placed in suitable spaces. In *Discipline and Punish*, meanwhile, Foucault does indeed map how power can spatially be configured for punitive means through his discussion of the Panopticon. The Panopticon was first theorised by Jeremy Bentham, who argued that a prison that would allow all inmates to be watched by a single watchman, without knowing if they were being observed in that moment or not, would lead to a system of total control, as the inmates would be effectively forced to "watch" themselves constantly and regulate their own behaviour. Foucault builds on Bentham's work to draw attention to the power dynamics of watching, that is to say, of accumulating knowledge, that is enabled by the architecture of the Panopticon. Specifically, Foucault emphasises how power can be manifested simply through the illusion of constant surveillance, and how power can be removed through the illusion of constant visibility:

> Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary… (*Discipline and Punish* 205)

As Thomas Flynn argues, the Panopticon is a spatialized account of a broader critique of the "'disciplinary' society of the modern age", that encompasses "the

omnipresence of surveillance devices, the vulnerability of our various communications systems to external review and interpretation, and the insinuation of authorities into the most private portions of our personal lives…" (60). By expressing these concerns through the architectural model of the self-regulating prison, Foucault demonstrates the complicity of space within these broader exercises of power, and how these spaces too can be used to dominate and subjugate. Whether through historiography and the creation of other sociocultural narratives, or through the formation and categorisation of space, Foucault demonstrates, as Tally termed it, the pervasive and capillary nature of power, and its appropriation and exploitation of forms of knowledge for its own growth.

Although Foucault does not directly address cartography in these considerations of how power is practised, his conceptualisation of power as a force of domination that does not prohibit but rather produces and that is inextricably linked with epistemological practices speaks distinctly to cartography. In particular, Foucault's framework has been employed by critical cartographers, a field of cartographic criticism that is rooted in critical theory and that seeks to illuminate the ways in which maps encode practices of power. The ways in which maps act as tools of power is the subject of chapter one and so will not be examined in full here; however, it is worth briefly highlighting the key theorists. Harley, one of the leading critics in this field, directly draws on the relationship between power and knowledge that Foucault

illustrates, arguing that just as the historian configures the past through the lens of the present, so too does the "surveyor, whether consciously or otherwise, replicat[e] not just the 'environment' in some abstract sense but equally the territorial imperatives of a particular political system" ('Power' 279), so that even the most seemingly objective maps are bound up in the systems of power in which they are created and deployed. This inescapable shaping by power renders all maps "socially constructed form[s] of knowledge" that produce and reproduce political discourse through both their content and circuit of communication ('Power' 277). Harley does not define politics, but his use of it effectively encompasses large-scale exercises of power. For Harley, it is imperative that cartographic theory take a deconstructionist approach to the study of the map in order to break the assumed link between reality and representation that the map presents, which will in turn reveal the "invisible or implied" systems of power at work in the map ('Deconstructing' 152).

In "Maps, Knowledge and Power" (1988), Harley approaches this through a parallel consideration of the map's political context and the symbolic potential of its iconography to reflect this context, rather than represent an abstract truth. In an analysis of maps and property rights in early modern Europe, for example, Harley argues that local maps are a product of certain "long-term structural changes of the transition from feudalism to capitalism" ('Power' 285), with the new economic system and its geographical division of labour being enabled by the map's representation of geography. Thus, accurate, large-

scale maps permitted a more thorough and codified exploitation of the land, its agricultural potential, and its tenants. Through the division of the land into allotments, the charting and reclamation of previously wild hills and moors, and the delineation of the land in precise measurements and scales, Harley argues that "the surveyor ever more frequently walks at the side of the landlord in spreading capitalist forms of agriculture" ('Power' 285). Much as the clock brought a regimented structure to workers' experience of time, so too did the map impose what Harley terms "space discipline" upon the land and its inhabitants ('Power' 285). For Harley, the centrality of the map to land rights in the shift to capitalism is emblematic of how cartography not only represents broader political movements and exercises of power, but how it works symbiotically alongside them to enable these dynamics.

Harley continues this argument in "Deconstructing the Map" (2001), further drawing attention to the ways in which maps are constructed by their political contexts, and the importance of deconstructing and laying bare these enmeshments of power. Harley argues that maps have both external and internal power: externally, power is exerted on cartography through the demands of patrons, and with cartography, through the ways in which the maps are employed. However, the power internal to cartography aligns the map more strongly with Foucault's conceptualisation of power not as judicial but as explicitly productive. The map's very methods of representation and the ways in which elements of the landscape are included, excluded, categorised,

and simplified, produce a knowledge of the land which in turn creates power, power that is "not generally exercised over individuals but over the knowledge of the world made available to people in general" ('Deconstructing' 112). As Harley argued previously, the cartographer thus aligns exactly with Foucault's figure of the historian, in that the power created by these forms of knowledge is not deployed directly upon individuals, but rather through the communication of the knowledge itself, which becomes enmeshed and normalised within the social structure. The knowledge that the map articulates comes to inform totalising understandings of geography, sociology, and political relations, which in turn enables particular power dynamics to be formed and exercised.

Wood builds on Harley's influential approach by demonstrating the inherent subjectivity of every map, that is to say, the biases it encodes based on its author and its intended audience. Wood defines power as "the ability to do work", arguing that maps work by serving these specific interests, thereby functioning as a continual exercise of power (1). Similarly to Harley, Wood takes a Foucauldian approach by exposing the impossibility of an objective map, much as Foucault confronted the supposed objectivity of created history, by arguing that the knowledge which produces it is always, invariably, socially and personally constructed. Wood claims that

> [k]nowledge of the map is knowledge of the world from which it emerges – as a casting from its mold, as a shoe from its last – isomorphic counter-image to everything in society that conspires to produce it. This, of course, would be to site the source of the map in a realm more diffuse than cartography; it would be to insist on a sociology of the map… (18)

Wood demonstrates the undeniable relationship between the map and the socio-political context it is produced in by highlighting the first satellite map of the Earth created by Tom Van Sant, a cartographic model that theoretically should, according not only to the scientific means by which it was produced but also the ideology of scientific objectivity which it insists on and represents, be free of the biases or interests of its maker. Drawing on Roland Barthes' claim that a photograph be free of a "code intervening between the object and its message" (qtd. in Wood 51), Wood demonstrates how Van Sant's photographic map of the Earth fails this requirement: the map is composed of numerous fragmented satellite shots of the Earth that were stitched together; it is hand tinted in places in order to accentuate the colour codification expected of a world map, where green represents land and blue represents water; and, as with the infamous Mercator projection, the surface of the Earth has been manipulated in order to facilitate the change from sphere to flat surface. Each of these amendments demonstrates the deliberate activity of the mapmaker and the ways in which they mould the map to fit their interests, thereby creating a code which intervenes between the reality of the object (in this case, the Earth) and the message (the map). Similarly, in a collaborative study with Fels, Wood examines cartographic renditions of nature, which Fels and Wood argue is a supposedly neutral territory, in order to demonstrate the inescapable presence of the mapmaker and the map as "nothing more than a vehicle for the creation and conveying of authority about, and ultimately over,

territory" (7). The continued relevance of Harley, Wood and Fels in the field of geographical and cartographical criticism has been commented on recently by Kitchin, Chris Perkins, and Martin Dodge who argue that their "avowedly political" approach is integral for moving beyond the conceptualisation of maps as purely representational objects and instead conceiving what they term a "post-representational cartography", that understands the ways in which maps constitute political relations in matters as diverse as colonialism, national identity, bureaucracy, and gender dynamics (10).

That these are issues that intersect not only with social and political theory but also with literary studies has been commented on by certain critics, who have noted the literary potential of critical cartography as a methodological tool. Cooper argues that research interested in bridging the gap between geocriticism – criticism engaged with issues of spatiality, understood broadly – and the humanities needs to be "predicated upon a self-reflexive engagement with geographical thinking and practices rather than an uncritically imprecise reliance on spatial vocabularies and discourses" (30). Specifically, Cooper argues that scholarship engaged with any form of literary cartography needs to be informed by the work of key cartographic critics such as Harley and Wood, work which comprehends the political as well as the representational implications of cartography, even when fictionalised. Cooper's insistence on a critical cartographic framework is motivated by what Tania Rossetto terms a "decartographization" of the literary field, in which

maps and mapping become largely regarded as metaphorical practices, thereby stripping them of the power relations that Harley and Wood have theorised are integral to mapping (517). Stephen Daniels et al argue that mapping "as a term of cultural description in the arts and humanities has moved beyond the practice of cartography to a broader, metaphorical sense of interpreting and creating images and texts" (Daniels et al. xxx), while Melba Cuddy-Keane insists that "we need constantly to examine the literal ground on which these metaphors depend".

The tendency to treat mapping as a metaphor or a methodology rather than as a concrete political praxis will be examined briefly below through the work of Moretti and Tally; however, I want to highlight here responses such as Cooper's that insist on a re-engagement with cartography as a historical and geographical practice. Regarding the relationship between maps and literature, these critics argue that a return to actual maps as material artefacts is essential for further unpacking politics of space in literary narratives. Lilley argues that "[a]t a time when figurative and metaphorical 'mappings' are becoming particularly prominent in other humanities areas, such as literary criticism and philosophy, it is perhaps worth underlining the benefits of still thinking about maps and 'map-making' in a more conventional and literal sense" (31). This was also a directive raised by Thacker, who suggested that "[r]ather than only treating 'mapping' as a metaphor it seems important to return to the map as a set of material signs, and to understand what is at issue

when a text employs an actual map as a component of the narrative" (64). Thacker argues that what he terms a critical literary cartography must return to the maps presented in texts, in order to analyse cartography as an example of visual culture within the narratives. For Thacker, this requires an explicitly geographical methodology that engages with an understanding of historical geographies as well as current debates in geographical and cartographical criticism regarding understandings of space. In this study, I employ the methodological framework put forward by these critics by drawing on critical cartography throughout. This interdisciplinary approach is vital, I argue, in not only outlining the political complexity of Tolkien's texts as informed by the accompanying maps, but also in further demonstrating the constructed nature of maps even within fictional works, thereby revealing the power relations they encode and enable.

Section III: Literary maps

Employing critical cartographic frameworks in the analysis of literature is particularly necessary given the abundance of literary maps available that span across authors, periods, and genres. Diana Wynne Jones' satiric overview of the fantasy genre, *A Tough Guide to Fantasyland* begins, "Find the MAP. It will be there. No Tour of Fantasyland is complete without one" (1). Written in 1997, Jones' tongue-in-cheek claim demonstrates how the fantasy map had at this point become a generic cliché, appearing in texts as diverse

as Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea Quartet* (1964-1990), Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels, and Norton Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth* (1961). Its fixed presence within the genre is frequently credited to Tolkien's prolific and iconic cartographic production: Ekman argues that maps have become "almost obligatory" due to the popularity of Tolkien's novels; Farah Mendlesohn claims that "Tolkien set the trend for maps…" (14); and R.C. Walker explains that not only did Tolkien's maps "set a high standard, they seem to have created an interest in fantasy maps…so that a map has almost become de rigeur in new and reprinted fantasy" (37). While Tolkien was certainly key to the genre's twentieth-century manifestation, however, literary maps – that is to say, maps that were printed alongside the text they illustrated – had existed for centuries previously.

Disregarding biblical maps (which will be discussed in further detail in chapter one), the first map illustrating a fictional place from a creative narrative is Sandro Botticelli's map of hell, which forms part of the 1485 illustrated manuscript of the *Divine Comedy*.[2] The map depicts hell as a series of cascading rings, each characterised according to Dante's conceptualisation of the nine circles of hell. Meanwhile, the first fictional map to be designed specifically for the narrative and be printed alongside its text upon publication appeared some thirty years later in Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). John

[2] I want to credit Huw Lewis-Jones's *The Writer's Map* for documenting many of the maps in this section.

Bunyan published *The Pilgrim's Progress* in 1678; although the original text did not contain a map, Christian's journey through Slough of Despond, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and towards the Celestial City has been mapped countless times since. A century later, Daniel Defoe's sequel to his popular *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), *Serious Reflections During the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: With his Vision of the Angelick World* (1720), featured a map of the desert island, along with an aptly placed label reading "Poor Robin Cruso". A few years later, Jonathan Swift's satire *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) was similarly printed alongside a series of maps depicting the fictional lands of Lilliput and Brobdingnag, as well as Japan. These maps were striking for abandoning the more illustrative tendencies of *Utopia* and *Robinson Crusoe*, and tending towards a more simplified topographic style.

The growing interest in travel and adventure literature propelled the creation of several more famous literary maps in the nineteenth century: Johann David Wyss's *Der Schweizerische Robinson* (1812), first translated into English as *The Swiss Family Robinson* in 1814, features a map of "New Switzerland", the island upon which the family is marooned; Jules Verne's subsequent version of the shipwreck narrative, *L'Île Mystérieuse* (1874) – published as *The Mysterious Island* in 1875 – includes a topographic map of Île Lincoln; Lewis Carroll's nonsense poem *The Hunting of the Snark* was published in 1876

alongside a blank map;[3] the writing of Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, as briefly discussed above, was rooted in the conception of the treasure map; H. Rider Haggard's colonial adventure story *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) included a roughly drawn map presented as a found document; Arthur Morrison's *A Child of Jago* (1896) features a sketch map of the slums of East London; while William Morris' *The Sundering Flood* (1897), one of the first works of modern fantasy, features a frontispiece map of the area surrounding the eponymous river.

By the twentieth century, literary cartography had become relatively prevalent in comparison to its latent beginnings: J.M. Barrie's *The Little White Bird* (1902), his precursor to *Peter Pan* (1904), featured "The Child's Map of Kensington Gardens"; in the same year Rudyard Kipling's *Just-So Stories* featured a detailed, illustrative map of the Amazon River; in 1912, Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* featured a hand drawn chart of the Maple-White Land complete with annotations including "here we saw great elk" and "Central Lake (sandbanks and monsters)"; also in 1912, Thomas Hardy published a collected edition of his works complete with a map of Wessex; in America, the eighth book in Frank L Baum's Wizard of Oz series, *Tik-Tok of Oz* (1914) featured two maps, one of Oz and one of the broader continent where Oz and

[3] The map, complete with compass points and scale, but depicting only a blank space, corresponds to the nonsense lines in the poem: "He had bought a large map representing the sea,/Without the least vestige of land:/And the crew were much pleased when they found it to be/A map they could all understand" (683).

neighbouring magical lands were located; E.H. Shepard famously provided illustrations for A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926), along with a map of Hundred Acre Wood (possibly due to the popularity of his *Winnie-the-Pooh* illustrations, Shepherd also drew a map for the 1931 edition of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908)); the first edition of Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* (1930) features a map of the Lake District on its dust jacket; William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) provided a map of the fictional Yoknapatawpha County in Mississippi, where several of Faulkner's novels were set; while concurrent to Tolkien's own publications, E.R. Eddison was producing maps for his fantasy works such as the *Zimiamvia* series, Fletcher Pratt included a map in his fantasy novel *The Well of the Unicorn* (1948), Mary Shephard drew a map of Cherry Tree Lane and its surroundings for P.L. Travers's *Mary Poppins in the Park* (1952), and three of C.S. Lewis's Narnia novels, namely *Prince Caspian* (1951), *The Silver Chair* (1953), and *The Horse and His Boy* (1954) depict various areas of Narnia cartographically, as illustrated by Pauline Baynes.

This brief overview indicates the rich history of literary cartography that preceded Tolkien, and that provides fertile ground for scholarship on these maps. Surprisingly, however, the critical field is very limited, and largely focuses on fantasy texts.[4] One of the first interventions into this subject was

[4] Some of these maps have received more scholarly attention, but this is often in the context of their author's broader work rather than of cartography as a literary device.

Phillip C. Muehrcke and Juliana O. Muehrcke's 1974 article "Maps in Literature". Notable for the breadth rather than depth of their study, Muehrcke and Muehrcke cite a range of fictional maps, as well as references to map reading, that appear in both fantasy and non-fantasy literature, in order to talk through some of the key characteristics and tensions within cartography, such as the map's pretension to truth versus its invented nature, the map's ability to construct narrative, and the limitations of representation, and to argue that it is these very tensions that make it such a compelling tool for authors. Muehrcke and Muehrcke's study is relatively cursory, yet it is striking for the ways in which it uses literature to comment on cartographic practices and vice versa, treating the maps in the texts as maps rather than illustrative devices.

This approach was unfortunately not developed in subsequent studies. Walker's 1981 article "The Cartography of Fantasy", despite its promising title, dwells largely on the categorisation of setting in fantasy literature; his cartographic approach limited to a call for "better maps" that would "be a considerable aid in the understanding and enjoyment of a fantasy tale". Although Walker demonstrates an awareness of and curiosity about the relationship between fictional worlds and their cartographic representations, his argument is largely paratextual: he is interested in the redrawing of maps for fantasy literature in order to ameliorate the reader's experience of the text, rather than in the critical or thematic significances of the map as object. Peter Hunt makes a similar point regarding the map's usefulness for the external

reader, arguing that fantasy maps help to structure the narrative and speak to the setting. Hunt does briefly consider the critical value of literary maps: he is interested in "low fantasy" maps that illustrate the English landscape, arguing that these maps therefore become a tool for engaging with "landscapes of profound national symbolism" (13). Nevertheless, just like Walker, Hunt is primarily interested in the map's ability to represent the landscape, rather than in relationships of power between the map, the mapper and the mapped. This strand is picked up and expanded by Wolf, who examines the map as a world-building tool. As this is the subject of Wolf's study, it is not surprising that he focuses on this particular function of the map, yet he limits himself to the map's ability to aid in the author's world-building by representing the world that is described in the text and at times even the world beyond the text, in order to reinforce the reader's belief in this sub-creation. Wolf however does not investigate how these maps can contribute to sociocultural and political aspects of world-building, and how the very existence of a cartographic tradition within the sub-creation can add complexity and richness to the narrative.

Deirdre F. Baker does notably engage with the politics of fictional and fantasy maps. Drawing on Jones' satire of the fantasy map, Baker argues that all fantasy maps are effectively reproductions of each other, with each troublingly encoding the same conservative politics within its image. Baker illustrates how these maps, including those in texts by Tolkien, Lewis, Christopher Paolini,

and Garth Nix, are all structured around socially constructed understandings of cardinal directions: in Tolkien, for example, there is a clear tension between West and East, which Baker argues symbolises the threat of Nazi Germany and post-World War I anxieties; while in Lewis, the threat comes from the south of the map from the orientalised land of Calormen, which Baker considers an embodiment of English anxieties surrounding the Muslim world. Although Baker's allegorical readings verge on the simplistic and reductive, her recognition of the political character of imaginary worlds is important. Unfortunately, Baker does not dwell on how the maps articulate and foster these anxieties, and what this has to say about the practice of cartography, focusing instead on the politics of the text with the map as a mere reflection.

Padrón similarly considers the role of the fictional map beyond its engagement with the external reader. In his discussion of the map of More's *Utopia*, he argues "[t]he maps, therefore, are not just maps of an imaginary island, made available so we can see and know it. They are emblems of our desire to know and possess that island…" (269–70); while he frames the maps in *Gulliver's Travels* as a cartographic expression of the text's satire of travel narratives and their quest for absolute knowledge. Elsewhere, however Padrón appears to double back on this understanding of the relationship between the text and its map, claiming that "[l]iterature of all kinds has a great deal to tell us about space and place, but the things it has to communicate are not necessarily of the sort that lends itself to cartographic representation. Mapping involves

visibility, stasis, hierarchy, and control. Literature often works to subvert these things…" (265). Here, Padrón sees the map as a literary device that has limited usefulness, rather than as its own form of expression. Although Padrón's acknowledgement of maps as significant beyond their illustrative value is essential, his brief analysis of each literary text and his lack of engagement with cartographic theory renders this study largely perfunctory.

The most important and rigorous study of fantasy maps is Ekman's *Here Be Dragons: Exploring Fantasy Maps and Settings* (2013). Ekman's approach is what he terms "topofocal", where "the setting…provides a critical way into the work" (*Here Be Dragons* 216). Using maps as a touchstone to discuss the significance and complexity of fantasy settings, Ekman acknowledges the political nature of the map, investigating how they are both presented and present within the narrative in order to comment on spatial, temporal, and cultural tensions in the texts. Although Ekman is largely interested in contemporary texts from the mid-1970s to the mid-2000s, he draws prolifically upon Tolkien due to, as he argues, his central position within the genre. Beginning with a quantitive analysis of a selection of fantasy texts – which yields limited conclusions largely concerning the proportion of fantasy literature accompanied by maps and the type of world depicted – Ekman moves onto a more interesting qualitative analysis, that acknowledges both the paratextual and narrative function of the literary map. In particular, Ekman performs a close reading of Tolkien's "A Part of the Shire" that examines the

ways in which the map extends the narrative, by providing information not only about the topography of the Shire but also about how the Shire's inhabitants understand, interpret, and represent their home. Ekman touches on certain dynamics of power that the map embodies, arguing that the very act of mapping the Shire, and the level of topographical and toponymical detail it presents, fits into a wider pattern of control over the landscape that is then mirrored within the textual narrative, such as in the agricultural nature of the Shire or the driving back of The Old Forest from the Shire's borders. Ekman then extends this approach to other key issues of setting in fantasy texts, including borders and boundaries, the tension between nature and culture, and political realms and those who rule them. Although these subsequent chapters do not necessarily focus on maps to the same extent as the first chapter, they maintain Ekman's topofocal lens, exploring how various representations of setting can illuminate broader thematic and generic concerns.

Since Ekman's study, there has been little written on literary maps. Maria Sachiko Cecire draws on Foucault's idea of spatial power in order to briefly consider how the map of Narnia contributes to the nationalistic and colonial character of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (1952), arguing that the medieval character of the map "recalls the political divisions and potential for discovery implied in these earlier images of the world" (115). A 2018 special issue of *Children's Literature in Education*, meanwhile, examines maps and mapping in children's and young adult literature, engaging with the broad

spectrum of paratextual, political, and technological possibilities of literary cartography. Indeed, the most important recent intervention in the field is Ekman himself: drawing on cartographic theory by Wood, Fels, and Matthew H. Edney, which argues that every map has an author, a subject, and a theme, Ekman reads the map of Brandon Sanderson's *The Rithmatist* (2013) in order to discover the map's potential for illustrating the fantasy world's conflicts, and in particular its colonial tensions. Recent scholarship, scant as it is, is therefore turning towards the fantasy maps' political and narrative possibilities and away from the map as mere paratext or world-building device. Yet this approach still remains limited: there is yet to be an extensive study that engages, as Cooper argued, with critical cartography that centres not only a map but a corpus of maps at the centre of the discourse, in order to demonstrate the pervasively political nature of cartography, and its intersections with the politics of the text.

Section IV: Space in literature

What unites the above studies, few as they are, is their focus on printed maps that are published alongside texts: although their approaches vary, and there is a tendency to focus on the map as paratext, the material map is nevertheless key to their arguments. Although this may appear a self-evident requirement, "literary cartography" is in fact frequently used to designate another, critically well-known field that is nevertheless tangential to fictional maps, and which uses mapping as either a methodological practice that encompasses the

visualisation of literature – its spaces, its narratives, its subtexts – or as a metaphorical one. This approach has been critiqued by Daniels, Cooper, Thacker, and Lilley, as discussed above, for widening the disjuncture between complex understandings of cartography and its socio-political implications and literary interventions into geographical and cartographical issues. Although this present study is not concerned with these metaphoric or methodological approaches to cartography for these reasons, it is nevertheless worth briefly outlining some of these conceptualisations of a "literary cartography", which is a vast and complex field that has even engaged with the fantasy genre. However, as I am investigating this line of thought for exclusionary rather than inclusionary purposes, I will focus on just two of its key critics, Moretti – whose approach is methodological – and Tally – who uses cartography as metaphor – in order to examine their formulation of literary cartography and demonstrate why it does not work within my own framework.

Moretti begins his *Atlas of the European Novel* (1999) by advocating for a closer relationship between literature and geography:

> An atlas of the novel. Behind these words lies a very simple idea: that geography is not an inert container, is not a box where cultural history 'happens', but an active force that pervades the literary field and shapes it in depth. Making the connection between geography and literature explicit, then – mapping it: because a map is precisely that, a connection made visible – will allow us to see some significant relationships that have escaped us thus far. (*Atlas* 3)

Although Moretti encourages the collapse of the boundaries between geographical and literary fields, he is not interested in maps themselves as an object of study and as a literary form, but rather as a methodological tool that can be used to analyse literature in new ways, using data visualisation to trace the articulation of spaces and the movement through these spaces in some of the key novels of the nineteenth century. Moretti's approach to mapping is twofold: firstly, he focuses on "the study of space in literature" (*Atlas* 3), which involves the mapping of fictional spaces in order to highlight the "place-bound nature of literary forms", as well as the "internal logic of narrative", that is to say the organisation of the plot (*Atlas* 5); secondly, he charts the movement of novels in real historical spaces in the nineteenth century through circulating libraries, book markets, and publishing houses, thereby transforming the history of the book into the geography of the book. Regarding the former, for example, a map depicting the locations of Jane Austen's novels – all clustered in the south of England – leads Moretti to comment on Austen's purposeful construction of an image of England that excludes the by turns industrial and wild lands of the North and Scotland, which Moretti connects with contemporary concerns regarding the cementing of the nation-state as homeland (*Atlas* 13). In a study of London, meanwhile, Moretti charts a corpus of nineteenth-century novels in order to communicate a morphological understanding of the city that is divided sharply across class lines (*Atlas* 77).

In his subsequent study *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (2005), Moretti once more uses data visualisation to enable new conclusions on space in literature. Employing what he terms the critical practice of "distant reading" (*Graphs Maps Trees* 1), which intentionally reduces and simplifies the available data in order to note broader patterns and interrelations, Moretti turns to Mary Mitford's *Our Village*, published in five volumes between 1824 and 1832. Charting the destinations of the numerous country walks that occur in this collection, Moretti reveals a target-like pattern, with the village in the centre surrounded by concentric rings. This, Moretti argues, speaks to the novel's purposeful tension with contemporary preoccupations surrounding the city: Mitford forces the reader to "look at the world according to the older, 'centred' viewpoint of an unenclosed village" (*Graphs Maps Trees* 39). Moretti's use of critic-generated maps to analyse texts works to collapse the boundary between the disciplines of literature and geography. Although Moretti eschews the numerous literary maps already in existence and does not dwell on the relationship between literature and geography when mediated through authorial literary cartography, his work is nevertheless important for highlighting the representational ability of the map, not only in terms of representing natural environments, but also in representing socio-political and cultural patterns and tensions.

Although Tally does not engage in practices of data visualisation, his understanding of literary cartography is similarly rooted in the absence of

authorially produced maps in favour of a broader conceptualisation of mapping. Specifically, Tally frames narrative itself as a form of mapping, arguing that "like the mapmaker, the writer must survey territory, determining which features of a given landscape to include, to emphasise, or to diminish…The writer must establish the scale and the shape, no less of the narrative than of the places in it" (45). For Tally, then, the process of writing is itself a cartographic act, and the resultant narrative, with its mediated representations of natural and social space, is a cartographic object. Tally even explicitly excludes the maps that appear alongside texts from this framework, claiming that they "become supplemental and sometimes competing images to those conjured forth by the narratives themselves" (5).

For Tally, the act of recognising the narrative as map, that is to say, recognising the cartographic nature of literature rather than the literary nature of cartography, is emblematic of what he terms the "spatial turn" in the humanities in recent years. Drawing on a historic perspective, Tally argues that nineteenth-century and Modernist writing was dominated by questions of temporality, history, and teleological development; however, in the twentieth century, space began to insert itself – gradually at first, and more definitively after World War II – in the critical field (3). Tally attributes this shift to various factors: the restructuring of cities in the aftermath of the World Wars; the mass movement of populations through immigrations, exploration, and warfare; and a postcolonial consciousness of the politics of space (13). Crucially, Tally

argues, the twentieth century brought an awareness of space not merely as a neutral backdrop or setting for narrative, but rather as a socially constructed concept that is both product and productive, as Henri Lefebvre argued in *The Production of Space* (1974) (119–20). Narrative thus becomes part of this process of producing and being produced by space: a cartographic act that Tally argues needs to be read through spatial rather than solely temporal structures.

Tally thus advocates for a geocritical approach to literature, defining geocriticism quite simply as critical theory that engages with both the aesthetics and the politics of space, and that unpacks the continually developing spatial relations that structure the world (9). Engaging with the major critics of spatiality, including Erich Auerbach, Mikhail Bakhtin, Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Foucault, Fredric Jameson, Lefebvre, Moretti, and Edward Said, Tally explores the ways in which these theorists emphasise spatial practices, including mapping, as tools of power employed "both for repressive ends and as means to aid political liberation" (114). Tally argues that using geocriticism to analyse literary texts can unveil hitherto ignored power relations embedded and explored within these narratives. Tally's exploration of the "spatial turn" is therefore valuable for highlighting the political nature of space and the ways in which it is configured and deployed.

His study is by no means exhaustive, however. Although Tally touches on postcolonial issues, in particular through Said, he does not fully develop this line of inquiry, or attend to spatial politics from other marginalised perspectives, as analysis through a feminist or queer lens might facilitate. By using cartography primarily as a metaphor for narrative construction, meanwhile, Tally neglects the potential dialogue between the critics cited and cartography as a concrete practice. The occasions when Tally does briefly engage with actual literary maps, his analysis is thus very cursory, as his understanding of mapping does not encompass the political implications that critics such as Harley and Wood insist upon. Tally's engagement with Tolkien's maps in *The Hobbit*, for example, largely focuses on the map as a visualisation of spatial imagination, arguing that the map functions as a "geographical survey of imaginary places" and comparing the creative process of sub-creation to the cartographic impulse (151). Tally's understanding of cartography in this case, metaphoric as it is, largely rests on the concept of maps as creative and representational, which contrasts with critical cartography's exposure of the map's politically productive and constructive qualities.

Although both Moretti and Tally demonstrate an awareness of the inherent power dynamics and politics of spatiality, with Moretti even illustrating how maps can encode these dynamics, both Moretti's and Tally's lack of interest in literary maps not only neglects the ability of the literary map to encode political complexities, but also disregards the nuances in the relationship between an

authorially produced map and its text, and the translation of narrative power dynamics both textually and cartographically. My understanding of literary cartography therefore does not engage with these two approaches, prolific as they are in the field, in favour instead of the methodological approach suggested by Cooper, in which critical cartographic theory is employed to understand the literary map not only as a cartographic object, but as a Foucauldian exercise of power. As my thesis is interested, much as Tally is, in the politics of space understood more widely – including environmental and postcolonial formulations – this approach will enable me to consider cartography as part of a broader assertion of authority over Tolkien's fictional geographies, which is where my approach varies from Tally's. Literary cartography, as I define it, is therefore very much engaged with issues of geography and spatiality, but at its heart there must always be, as Jones suggested, a map.

Section V: An overview of Tolkien scholarship

My study therefore examines both Tolkien's cartographic corpus and Middle-earth's wider cartographic tradition from this critical perspective, focusing particularly on how maps intersect with, articulate, and enable specific power dynamics between humans and the land. That maps have the ability to do so has already been claimed by Kitchin et al, who argue that "examining different categories across which power might be articulated…can reveal how maps

reflect but also constitute different kinds of political relations…" (10), as well as by Jeremy Black, who examines how maps inform and support national and political identities; Edney, who investigates the map as an imperialist project; and Donna Haraway, who demonstrates the gender and racial politics of the traditional map by arguing that "[s]ituated knowledges are always marked knowledges; they are re-markings, reorientatings, of the great maps that globalized the heterogeneous body of the world in the history of masculinist capitalism and colonialism…" (111). This study therefore intends to examine how cartography marks and constitutes three key dynamics between humans and the land in Tolkien's legendarium: environmental control and harm, the tension between human and non-human temporalities and its spatial manifestations, and power politics over land and imperialism, as well as an introductory chapter examining the history of political cartography more closely through a medieval and early twentieth century lens.

As demonstrated above in the discussion of scholarship on fictional cartography, an investigation into Tolkien's maps read through a critical framework that highlights the relations of power that cartography encodes and facilitates has not previously been carried out. The closest study would be Ekman's *Here Be Dragons*, which highlights the intersection between the maps and thematic narrative concerns, and his most recent article, in which he explicitly employs a critical cartographic framework for a non-Tolkien map. There does exist a body of Tolkien scholarship that examines the thematic

concerns my chapters focus on external to cartography; however, I argue that these studies by and large distance themselves from contemporary theoretical and political readings, opting instead for a historicist or even biographical approach. This study will therefore constitute a radical shift in terms of how these thematic concerns are politically valued, and the frameworks through which they are read.

There are several studies of Tolkien's maps that are not considered contributions to the critical field of literary cartography but are nevertheless key to understanding Tolkien's corpus. Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull's *J.R.R. Tolkien: Artist and Illustrator* (1995), followed by the more comprehensive *The Art of The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien* (2011) and *The Art of The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien* (2015), fulfil an important archival function, collecting not only Tolkien's completed illustrations but also sketches and drafts, which becomes particularly useful for considering the chronological development of Tolkien's maps. The illustrated catalogue for the 2018 Bodleian exhibition *Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth* (2018) edited by Catherine McIlwaine also features a comprehensive map section, reproducing the key *The Lord of the Rings* maps and drafts, including the annotated map of Middle-earth discovered inside a copy of *The Lord of the Rings* in 2015. These texts are indispensable for uncovering the creative process behind Tolkien's published maps, yet their approach is largely material and art historical, focusing on the maps as examples of Tolkien's illustrative output rather than

on their thematic or narrative relevance. Additionally, there exist several works that recreate Tolkien's maps according to various styles and functions, including Karen Wynn Fonstad's *The Atlas of Middle-earth* (1994) and Barbara Strachey's *The Journeys of Frodo* (1981). These are important for their engagement with the textual narrative and the ability of the map to work within its parameters, but their maps are largely reproductive of narrative details rather than thematic or theoretical concerns, and moreover vary largely from Tolkien's own stylistic and conceptual cartographic output.

Research into Tolkien's cartography forms only a small fraction of the overall body of Tolkien scholarship, a vast field that spans critical focuses as varied as philology, biography, mythopoesis, and poetic criticism. As well as book length studies and monographs published every year, there exist several journals focusing on Tolkien and his contemporaries, including *Tolkien Studies*, *Mythlore*, and the *Journal of Inkling Studies*, as well as Walking Tree Publishers, an independent press dedicated to Tolkien scholarship. Given the breadth of material available on this topic, it is difficult to give a succinct overview of the entire critical field. There does not exist a recently compiled annotated bibliography of Tolkien scholarship:[5] the most recent comprehensive volume is the *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopaedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment*, edited by Michael C. Drout and published in 2006. Rather

[5] *Tolkien Studies* publishes an annual Bibliography and "Year's Work" round-up; however, the bibliography is not annotated and the round-up only encompasses a year's worth of publications rather than giving a broad overview of the field.

than a chronological summary of the field, however, this encyclopaedia divides scholarship among 542 entries specific to Tolkien's legendarium and broader critical body of work, with a detailed bibliography following each section. In terms of a more discursive summation of the field, the most recent example is Patrick Curry's introduction to an assessment of the critical field of Tolkien studies, appearing in the 2014 edited collection *A Companion to J.R.R. Tolkien*. Unfortunately, Curry takes his title "The Critical Response to Tolkien's Fiction" rather too literally, focusing for the majority of the article on hostile voices from the 1950s through to the present day who deride both Tolkien's fiction and the academic study of it, rather than on the numerous important studies that have been carried out. I do not want to deny the relative neglect of Tolkien and fantasy literature more broadly in academia; however, with a large body of scholarship, numerous specialist publications, and annual representation at some of the largest academic conferences, including the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo and the International Medieval Congress at Leeds, I find it unproductive to dwell on the ways that Tolkien is overlooked rather than studied when giving an overview of the state of scholarship.

Moreover, Curry's brief summary of the potential critical approaches to Tolkien is also limited. Curry claims that

> *The Lord of the Rings* is thus fundamentally not one but several things: a story told by a master storyteller; a story inspired by philology; a story suffused with Catholic values; and a mythic (or mythopoeic) story with

> a North European pagan inflection. It is also a story that enables the contemporary reader to imaginatively inhabit a nonmodern world, one that throws into question some central modern values and assumptions… ('Critical Response' 381)

This summary echoes an earlier consideration of the various approaches to Tolkien scholarship put together by Drout and Hilary S.Z. Wynne in 2000. In this annotated bibliography, Drout and Wynne divide the field into four key categories: source studies, mythological approaches, examinations of good versus evil, and what they term a "defence of Tolkien", which encompasses both "political" approaches, and also arguments such as Curry's (117). Despite the fourteen-year gap between these evaluations, in both studies the political implications of Tolkien's texts appear as an afterthought, if at all. Both these categorisations and, I argue, the works that fit into them, therefore frequently reflect a largely apolitical, historicist approach to the field that continues within more recent criticism, as seen in Curry's assessment.

It is undeniable that source studies form the basis of Tolkien scholarship. I think it is worthwhile at this stage to point out the slight irony of this situation: Tolkien himself, in his essay "The Monster and the Critics", criticised those who approach *Beowulf* as a "quarry of fact and fancy" rather than a work of art, comparing those excavating for source material as those scrabbling for loose stones in the dirt and ignoring the tower they came from (*Monsters and Critics* 5). Nevertheless, given the historic, linguistic, and intertextual richness of Tolkien's writing, potential sources have become a key focus of study. Drout

and Wynne point to Tom Shippey's seminal studies as the keystones of this approach. Shippey's *The Road to Middle-earth*, originally published in 1982, takes a broadly philological approach, demonstrating how Tolkien's engagement with medieval languages and literatures enabled the construction of narrative and mythological depth found in the legendarium. Shippey's medievalist approach has been adopted by numerous works since, notably in *J.R.R. Tolkien and His Literary Resonances* (2000) edited by George Clark and Daniel Timmons, *Tolkien the Medievalist* (2008) edited by Jane Chance and *Tolkien and the Study of his Sources: Critical Essays* (2011), edited by Jason Fisher. Of the three, Chance's volume is most explicitly medieval: essays such as Miranda Wilcox's "Exilic imagining in *The Seafarer* and *The Lord of the Rings*" or Michael W. Maher S.J.'s "'A land without stain': medieval images of Mary and their use in the characterisation of Galadriel" draw on medieval literature and iconography in order to examine how Tolkien shaped his sub-creation according to his academic scholarship. Fisher's volume meanwhile draws equally on antique, medieval, and contemporary sources, in order to both justify the methodology of source criticism and to demonstrate its applicability in a wide range of comparative studies. As Shippey argues in the introduction to the collection, "[a]ll literary works bear some relation to the milieu in which they were composed and received, but we often do not realise how quickly elements of those milieu are forgotten" ('Introduction' 9). Source criticism thus attempts to recontextualise the literary work by tracing back the author's potential and myriad influences. Clark and Timmons carry out a

similar project, taking a comparative approach mainly with medieval texts such as *Gawain and the Green Knight* and Chaucer. Clark and Timmons' motivation is, similar to Curry's, primarily defensive: by situating Tolkien amongst his literary influences, they seek to place him within a canon from which they argue he has hitherto been excluded.

Given this scholarly focus on how Tolkien's works engage with texts with which he would have been academically or personally familiar, there is not much room left for engagement with critical theory that seeks to separate the text from its author in order to consider its political possibilities. One of the few exceptions to this is the collection *Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages* (2005) edited by Jane Chance and Alfred K. Siewers. This volume takes its cue from the state of current medieval scholarship, which frequently draws on contemporary critical theory to analyse cultural products from the Middle Ages. In her essay "A Postmodern Medievalist?", Verlyn Flieger argues that the medievalism in Tolkien's sub-creation is not consistent enough to warrant its medievalist categorisation, suggesting instead that Tolkien is "an author with a medieval background writing in and to his own twentieth century" ('Postmodern' 17). This conceptualisation enables several essays in the collection that interweave Tolkien's medieval influences with modern political contexts, such as Brian McFadden's "Fear of Difference, Fear of Death: The Sigelwara, Tolkien's Swertings, and Racial Difference" and Chance's "Tolkien and the Other: Race and Gender in Middle-Earth". Although these essays are the exception rather

than the rule in this field, they demonstrate how source studies as a methodological practice can nevertheless also engage with critical theory and relations of power within the text.

Scholarship that engages with Tolkien's mythopoetic and world-building practice is also largely depoliticised. This has already been demonstrated in Wolf's examination of cartography as a world-building device, in which he neglects the capacity of the map to underpin power relations in favour of the map's reinforcement of the reader's belief. Chance's *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth: A Reader* (2004) bridges the gap between source studies and mythology by examining the mythic influences that structure Tolkien's sub-creation. Again, only one essay in the collection examines the politics of power relations: Jen Stevens compares Tolkien's Beren and Lúthien with Ovid's Pyramus and Thisbe in order to examine the restrictions and empowerment associated with gendered voice. Flieger's *Interrupted Music: The Making of Tolkien's Mythology* (2005) examines the construction of Tolkien's intricate sub-creation through an analysis not only of his published novels but of the subsequently posthumously published *The History of Middle-earth*. Placing Tolkien in comparison with other examples of mythmaking in the British tradition, including Edmund Spenser, John Milton, and James Joyce, Flieger demonstrates the national, creative, and historic impetuses behind mythmaking and Tolkien's adoption of these strategies in order to create what he termed his "mythology for England". The nationalistic character of myth is

vital to constructing power relations, but Flieger's approach remains largely extradiegetic, considering mythopoesis as a practice rather than myth as a literary device to explore power within the text. Elizabeth A. Whittingham's *The Evolution of Tolkien's Mythology* (2007) is meanwhile less interested in the political character of myth, than in Tolkien's process of constructing his mythology over approximately six decades, as well as in the influences he draws on throughout this process. More recent scholarship on this topic includes *Sub-creating Arda: World-building in J.R.R. Tolkien's Work, Its Precursors, and Its Legacies* (2019). This edited collection includes an earlier version of this study's third chapter, as well as an essay by Robin Markus Auer on the subversive power of water as a natural element in the legendarium and an ethno-topographical reading of the relationship between mountains and race by Hamish Williams; largely, however, the remaining essays focus on world-building and mythopoesis as a methodological and theoretical framework, rather than as an opportunity for considering the political implications of these themes. For the sake of brevity and to avoid repetition, I will not go into as much detail for Drout and Wynne's third category, good and evil: examples of this scholarship include Kathleen E. Dubs' "Providence, fate, and chance: Boethian philosophy in *The Lord of the Rings*" (1981), Flieger's *Splintered Light: Logos and Language in Tolkien's World* (1983), Richard Purtill's *J.R.R. Tolkien: Myth, Morality and Religion* (1984), Shippey's *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* (2001), and Jonathan Evans' "The anthropology of Arda: Creation, theology, and the race of Men" (2008). These studies either

use a Christian framework – demonstrating a reliance on authorial context given Tolkien's Catholic faith – or limit themselves to traditional theories of morality such as Boethius or Manichaeism rather than engaging with new ethical paradigms and philosophies.

It is not my intention to argue that the works discussed above are not examples of rigorous or valuable scholarship – which they certainly are – but rather to demonstrate the extent to which these approaches have been divorced from a theoretical context that intersects with political concerns. As far as the individual studies are concerned, this is not necessarily a criticism – all literary critique need not employ the same critical frameworks, after all – but when these works encompass a vast proportion of the overall body of scholarship, the field becomes not only depoliticised but also excluded from broader critical conversations that would place Tolkien in contact with other literary texts and, ironically, end the neglect of the field with which Curry, Drout, Wynne, Fisher, and others are so concerned.[6] Although it is certainly in the minority, however, there does exist a small yet emerging body of Tolkien scholarship that engages with political issues and relations of power within the legendarium in a theoretical rather than historical sense. Like this present study, Chance's *The Lord of the Rings: The Mythology of Power* (1992) draws on a Foucauldian conceptualisation of power in which power "means relations, a more-or-less

[6] For example, *The Green Studies Reader* (2000), a key handbook in the field of ecocriticism, includes an extract from Curry's environmentally oriented *Defending Middle-earth: Tolkien, Myth and Modernity* (1997), alongside theoretical chapters by Haraway, Lawrence Buell, and Greg Garrard and essays on Henry David Thoreau, Hardy, and Virginia Woolf.

organised, hierarchical, co-ordinated cluster of relations" that pervade throughout social and cultural institutions (*Mythology of Power* 20). Localising the primary reception of *The Lord of the Rings* in the 1960s and 1970s, at the height of student power and protest, Chance suggests that the novel is ideally situated for a consideration of this modern conceptualisation of power, arguing that both Foucault and Tolkien draw attention to the harm that institutionalised forms of power can cause, and the importance of liberating the individual from these socially, culturally, and economically hegemonic structures. Thus, Chance frames the first book of *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, as tackling the problem of "individual and class difference within the social body or construct", the second book *The Two Towers* as centering on "the heroic power of knowledge and language in the political power struggle", and the third *The Return of the King* as unpacking "the ideal of kingship as healing and service, in a unique inversion of master-servant roles and the domination by one or the other" (*Mythology of Power* 23). Chance's study is groundbreaking in its use of Foucauldian critical theory to navigate the complex power structures of Tolkien's novel; unfortunately, given its initial publication in 1992 before the completion of *The History of Middle-earth*, her study is not able to interrogate these relations throughout the legendarium.

Chance's study has prompted numerous others that engage with various critical theories and relations of power in Tolkien's writing. Notably, Robert Eaglestone's *Reading The Lord of the Rings: New Writings on Tolkien's*

Classic (2005) provides twelve essays that approach the novel through different contemporary philosophical and theoretical lenses, including gender and queer studies and spatiality. In terms of studies that focus on particular theoretical approaches, these can largely be grouped into three categories: studies examining Tolkien's representation of and engagement with gender, environment, and race. Of these three, gender has the least to do with this present study. As outlined above, there are several articles and chapters that engage with gender and particularly the role of women in the legendarium. In terms of more dedicated studies, Leslie A. Donovan and Janet Brennan Croft's edited collection *Perilous and Fair: Women in J.R.R. Tolkien's Work and Life* (2015) attempts to counteract the dominant view that there exist no important female characters in Tolkien's legendarium through a series of essays that examine the essential role of women both within the legendarium and in its reception. Elsewhere, Anna Smol has published on intimacy and masculinity in Tolkien's legendarium in *Modern Fiction Studies*, and Chance has developed the framework of queerness in her book-length study *Tolkien, Self and Other: "This Queer Creature"* (2016).

Environmental and ecocritical approaches to Tolkien's legendarium meanwhile comprise the largest subsect of political readings. These studies distinguish themselves from the large body of work on Tolkien's nature: this corpus ranges from nature as theological expression, as in Lisa Coutras' *Tolkien's Theology of Beauty: Majesty, Splendour and Transcendence in*

Middle-earth (2016), to nature as science, as in Walter S. Judd and Graham A. Judd's *Flora of Middle-earth: Plants of J.R.R. Tolkien's Legendarium* (2017). Unlike these works, studies on Tolkien's environmentalism examine the specifically ecological implications of human activity on the natural world. The first work in this area was Curry's *Defending Middle-earth*: *Tolkien, Myth and Modernity*, which seeks to position Tolkien's legendarium as an example of environmental writing. Curry's study is seminal in that it was the first to make this argument; unfortunately – as with his annotated bibliography – Curry is interested not only in the defence of Middle-earth from ecological damage, but from the antagonism of literary critics whose distaste for Tolkien Curry describes as "sheer literary snobbery" (*Defending* 9). In and of itself, this is an understandable – although somewhat uninteresting – avenue to explore, yet Curry's frustration with these critics seems to have translated into a general suspicion of literary theory, so that his environmental approach employs very little ecocriticism and relies purely on Tolkien's own attitude to the environment. Although this biographical focus is not in and of itself problematic, I argue that any investigation of a literary text's environmentalism that does not take into account environmental theories and politics cannot situate itself within broader ecocritical discourse.

Subsequent studies occasionally fare better in this regard: Flieger's "Taking the Part of the Trees: Eco-Conflict in Middle-earth" frames the environmental narratives in *The Lord of the Rings* as the result of abusive power relations

between the human and non-human, arguing that Tolkien portrays nature as an "endangered enclave in need of protection from encroaching civilisation" ('Eco-Conflict' 147). Matthew Dickerson and Evans' *Ents, Elves and Eriador: The Environmental Vision of J.R.R. Tolkien* (2006) meanwhile argues that Tolkien's environmentalist ethics is a predominantly Christian one, drawing on Tolkien's Catholic faith to frame his approach. Although they are interested in power relations, Dickerson and Evans' discussion thus largely centers around Christian ideas of stewardship, rather than on problematizing the very essence of these power relations. Liam Campbell's *The Ecological Augury in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien* (2011) examines and contrasts the environmental positions of various characters throughout the legendarium in order to position the texts as an "augury" or omen which "calls for a recovery of environmental values and a reconnection with nature" (*Ecological Augury* 21). Although Campbell does give a brief view of the environmental humanities, as with the previous studies, he does not engage with specific ecocritical frameworks, an omission that I believe continues to keep Tolkien divorced from the broader field. Helen Conrad-O'Brien and Gerard Hynes' edited collection *J.R.R. Tolkien: The Forest and the City* (2013) examines the tension between nature and culture in Tolkien's writings, and includes among other important essays a crucial chapter by Hynes on the intersection between deforestation and empire in the legendarium. Finally, Susan Jeffers' *Arda Inhabited: Environmental Relationships in The Lord of the Rings* (2014) situates Tolkien's novel within a complex theoretical framework. Jeffers argues that there exist three different

relationships with the natural world in Tolkien's novel: positive "power with" relationships, as exemplified by the Ents, Elves and hobbits, that embody Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome network that emphasises mutualism and an absence of hierarchies; "power from" relationships, as between the Men and Dwarves and their environments, that draw on Hegelian dialectics; and "power over" relationships, as illustrated through Sauron and Saruman, that are narcissistic and destructive in nature (16–17). While I do not agree with some of the conclusions that Jeffers draws, as I will discuss further on in this study, her methodology is valuable for situating Tolkien within a broader theoretical context, and for not retreading the same ground.

Studies on Tolkien in a postcolonial and critical race context reflect many of the same problems, with the added contention of the occasional distinct lack of sensitivity regarding Tolkien's own subject position as a white British man. Drout speaks of "the enormous sigh of relief at being able to read article after article without hearing repeated the litany of "race, class, and gender" (122). Curry meanwhile dismisses out of hand any attempt to critique Tolkien's depiction of racial hierarchies as an "unpleasant…accusation", displaying a profound misunderstanding of the effects of cultural visibility and representation by arguing that

> [p]erhaps the worst you could say is that Tolkien doesn't actually go out of his way to forestall the possibility of a racist interpretation. (I say 'possibility' because it is ridiculous to assume that readers automatically transfer their feelings about Orcs to all the swart or slant-eyed people they encounter in the street). (*Defending* 31)

Dimitra Fimi's study *Tolkien, Race, and Cultural History: From Fairies to Hobbits* (2009) focuses on the portrayal of race in Tolkien's legendarium, albeit from a largely historicist perspective: Fimi notes the problematic racialisation of certain categories of peoples in Middle-earth, but uses the framework of the medieval Great Chain of Being to explain it, partly away (*Tolkien, Race and Cultural History* 141). In a chapter entitled "Teaching Tolkien and Race: An Inconvenient Combination" (2015), meanwhile, Fimi again reiterates the problematics of Tolkien's racial politics from a pedagogical perspective, but again suggests a historicising approach, from medievalism to Victorian and Edwardian anthropology. This historicist approach is in and of itself valuable, but the lack of engagement with critical race or postcolonial theory means that Tolkien's writing is largely excluded from colonial and postcolonial canons. Tolkien himself was very much a product of the British Empire – he was born in 1892 in Bloemfontein in South Africa – and aspects of his writing bear striking similarity to colonial adventure stories such as those by Haggard; placing him within this context would allow a more complex and in-depth exploration of these themes within his work. There does exist limited research that takes this more theoretical approach: Anderson Rearick tackles the problem of the Orcs head on in "Why Is the Only Good Orc a Dead Orc? The Dark Face of Racism Examined in Tolkien's World" (2004); Elizabeth Massa Hoiem reads the tale of "Aldarion and Erendis: The Mariner's Wife" through an imperialist framework, arguing that Tolkien mirrors the act of creation with

colonisation; and Margaret Sinex looks at Tolkien's medievalism as an explicitly problematic practice, arguing that his Haradrim draw on the tradition of the monsterised Saracens in medieval literature. The edited collection *Tolkien and Alterity* (2017) by Christopher Vaccaro and Yvette Kisor meanwhile carries out vital research on various confrontations with the Other, including racial, gendered, and queer, in the legendarium.

Section VI: Thesis overview

I intend to situate my thesis in this more recent critical trend in Tolkien scholarship. Using the critical cartographic framework outlined above, this study will examine how cartography in Middle-earth intersects with, expresses, and facilitates exercises of power, understood through a Foucauldian lens. The first chapter examines the ways in which cartography has historically been bound up in facilitating power, focusing on the medieval and modern periods to demonstrate the map's ability to encode power, politics, and ideology. I define ideology as systems of thought informed and constructed by particular political persuasions, which are communicated and crucially promoted through various social and cultural apparatuses – including, in this case, cartography. By framing cartography as historically inextricable from power relations, I intend to investigate how Tolkien draws on particular stylistic and conceptual cartographic traditions from these two periods that enable such enmeshments of power, thereby creating a fictional cartographic tradition that is aesthetically

and structurally informed by cartography's historic relationship with power. The second chapter turns to a diagetic literary analysis that will continue throughout the rest of the study. This chapter examines the relationship between humans and the environment, positioning cartography as a tool of the human/nature binary that represents the control that humans attempt to enact over the natural world. Drawing on the work of ecocritics such as Greg Garrard and Timothy Clark, I intend to demonstrate how Tolkien's writing acts as a form of environmental protest that mirrors some of the key positions of deep ecological thought, by seeking to break the hierarchy between human and nature that the binary creates. In doing so, I want to demonstrate how this engagement with environmental concerns demands a consideration of Tolkien within his own contemporary context.

The third chapter continues this emphasis on situating Tolkien within his own period, and specifically within its attitude to time. I intend to examine how Tolkien's cartography is capable of mapping time and temporalities, and in particular changing ideas of time. This chapter takes a more historic approach, while continuing to consider the maps within a critical cartographic framework, and as tools of power. By outlining the shift in understandings of temporality due to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scientific discoveries of deep time, uniformitarianism, and evolution through the writings of Charles Lyell, James Hutton, and Charles Darwin, I will establish how Middle-earth's cartography articulates the tension between human and non-human timescales, as well as

anxieties around the passage of time. The fourth and final chapter examines how cartography is part of broader structures of power surrounding politics and conflict over land. Drawing on postcolonial theory by Frantz Fanon and Said, as well as postcolonial ecocriticism by Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, George B. Handley, Graham Huggan, and Helen Tiffin, this chapter unpacks how conflict over land is used to perpetuate hierarchies of power, and how cartography figures in this simultaneous exploitation of the land and its people.

Through these investigations, I intend to demonstrate both the methodological need to study literary cartography within a critical cartographic framework that takes into account the ways in which maps work in a post-representational sense and that fully embraces the complexities, nuances, and subtexts of the cartographic project, and the literary imperative to place Tolkien's works within these theoretical contexts, thereby opening his writing up to critical evaluations that have largely been neglected. Curry argues that Tolkien has been met with overwhelming hostility within literary criticism; I suggest that the response to this needs to be active participation in contemporary literary discourse that demonstrates and validates Tolkien's applicability across these theoretical fields, and positions his writing as a political and politicised text.

Chapter 1: Hic Sunt Dracones: Historical Perspectives on Tolkien's Cartography

That the map, finally, be a semiotic tool – that it be capable, in other words, of signifying the empire or of allowing references to the empire, especially in those instances when the empire is not otherwise perceptible…

- Umberto Eco, "On the Impossibility of Drawing a Map of the Empire on a Scale of 1 to 1" (97)

Section I: Introduction

In *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (1893), the second volume of his unsuccessful follow up to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), Lewis Carroll briefly highlights the subject of cartographic representation through Mein Herr, a traveller from an unspecified land who regales the eponymous fairy duo with tales of everyday life from his home country. Discovering a pocket map among his belongings, Mein Herr asks Sylvie and Bruno about the largest map that they would consider useful, prompting this exchange:

> 'About six inches to the mile.'
>
> 'Only six inches!' exclaimed Mein Herr. 'We very soon got to six yards to the mile. Then we tried a hundred yards to the mile. And then came the grandest idea of all! We actually made a map of the country, on the scale of a mile to the mile!'
>
> 'Have you used it much?' I enquired.

> ‘It has never been spread out, yet,’ said Mein Herr: ‘the farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well…’ (Carroll 556–57)

Mein Herr’s nonsensical conceptualisation of cartographic representation and accuracy prefigures the 1946 short story by Jorge Luis Borges entitled “On Exactitude in Science”. This tale similarly envisages maps at such a large scale that “a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province…” until, tiring of this supposed inaccuracy, the Cartographers Guild creates “a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it” (35). Future generations eventually deem the map useless, so that it disintegrates into tatters that are strewn throughout the Empire.

Both Carroll’s and Borges’ absurdist takes on cartography open up broader questions about the ways in which maps act as representations of the landscape. For both Mein Herr’s compatriots and the members of Borges’ Cartographers Guild, the only way to ensure perfect cartographic representation is to create a one-to-one scale map of the land; a project that ultimately fails in desirability and functionality. While these stories push the idea of a representational map to a farcical extreme, the failure of these maps to practically and successfully deliver the desired level of accuracy works to deconstruct the very possibility of a precise map. Although Carroll and Borges were satirising cartography’s ineffectual quest for accuracy rather than any

particular social or political subjectivity that maps embody, the inability of these maps to accurately represent the landscape without resorting to a one-to-one scale recalls these other ways in which maps fail as purely representational objects.

The encoding of social and political subjectivities in cartography is not necessarily synonymous with a technically inaccurate map, however, it similarly demonstrates the innate tension in cartography as a factual representation and as an artificially constructed object. Denis Wood comments on the mythic concept of the entirely objective map and its relationship with accuracy, arguing that the vocabulary used to describe maps – "mirrors", "accurate", "neutral" – works "to disguise the map as a…*reproduction*…of the world, disabling us from recognising it for a social construction...is any myth among cartographers more cherished that that of this map's dispassionate neutrality?" (emphasis in original) (22).

The dispassionate neutrality of the map is also contested by J.B. Harley, whose work – as discussed in the introduction – positions maps as far removed from Carroll's and Borges's fictional, purely representational documents, and instead as explicitly political and politicised objects. Taking an iconological approach, Harley argues that maps are value-laden images; both in terms of what they choose to omit and represent, and the systems of signs and styles that they employ, maps "are a way of conceiving, articulating, and structuring

the human world which is biased towards, promoted by, and exerts influence upon particular sets of social relations" ('Power' 278). Harley reconceptualises maps as a "literary" text, in order to draw attention to issues of socio-political context and the ways in which maps reciprocate these world views through their iconography, as well as factors of readership, authorship, and carto-literacy. Ultimately, Harley argues, maps are a vehicle for knowledge – not the objective factuality that they often purport to express, but for systems of knowledge that are used to maintain particular power relations, systems that are reinforced through cartographic symbolism.

This chapter intends to assess Tolkien's cartography from this perspective: not as an accurate representation or reproduction of his fictional landscapes, but as a socially and politically constructed text that imbibes and reflects the socio-political conditions of its production in the primary and secondary world. While the following three chapters examine this idea from particular theoretical angles in order to consider how maps, map-making, and map-reading in Middle-earth are all politicised concepts, this chapter will take a more extradiegetic approach, highlighting cartographic methods that Tolkien drew on from the primary world that are themselves informed by ideologies. This chapter is therefore less interested in the fictional socio-political conditions that can be read through the maps and that are discussed at length in the following three chapters, but rather in the ways Tolkien uses politically embedded methods from historic cartography in order to situate his maps within a tradition

of subjective mapmaking and as value-laden images. This deliberate positioning then enables the further enmeshments with political and ideological narratives that are explored in the following chapters.

As comparing Tolkien's maps to the breadth of cartographic history would be unfeasible within the limits of this chapter, I will focus on two distinct periods: the medieval and the modern, defined as post-Enlightenment through to Tolkien's own time. This is not to say that other genres and periods of mapmaking would not have shaped Tolkien's work, but as a limited exemplar of historic influence, the period he was directly drawing from – medieval – and the period he was writing in – modern – are the most relevant. The medieval influence is indeed already critically established; much as Tolkien's texts have typically been read through a medievalist lens, Tolkien's maps are also widely considered medievalist artefacts. Ricardo Padrón points out that although Tolkien's maps gesture towards contemporary techniques through the use of scales and a compass, "on the whole they resist the abstraction of modern cartography, preferring a deliberate, stylized archaism that echoes Tolkien's writing…", embodied through the iconographic depiction of natural features, rather than the use of abstract symbols, and the "vaguely old-fashioned" typography of the map (273). Padrón's argument is typical of the admittedly limited source studies which have been done on Tolkien's cartography, in that he references the "archaic" nature of the maps without comparing them to specific historic cartographic practices. Similarly, Dimitra Fimi discusses the

"typically anachronistic, medieval way" the I Vene Kemen map (see Image Appendix, fig. 3) in *The Book of Lost Tales* depicts both the Two Trees and the Sun and the Moon (*Tolkien, Race and Cultural History* 124); Karen Wynn Fonstad explains that "Tolkien was envisioning a world much as our medieval cartographers viewed our own…" by portraying the world as a disk (ix); and Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond argue that the appearance of the Lonely Mountain in Thror's Map (fig. 1) is very like the look of mountains on certain medieval woodcut maps (*Artist and Illustrator* 94).

Although each of these studies supports the characterization of Tolkien's cartography as "archaic", with most indicating a specifically medieval influence, the comparison between the source material and Tolkien's own attempts is largely cursory. Medieval understandings of geography, place, and politics, the ways in which these were expressed through maps, and the development of typical cartographic practices throughout the medieval period are rarely alluded to and never explored in depth, resulting in a vague but widely accepted categorization of Tolkien's maps as "medieval". The exception to this is Jason Fisher, who sources Tolkien's "Circles of the World" within a medieval tradition of depicting the world as a flat circle, as seen in the *Heimskringla*, the Latin Vulgate Bible, and in particular in the Hereford mappa mundi (this is discussed in greater detail in chapter three). Fisher explores both stylistic similarities between Tolkien's maps and the Hereford mappa mundi, such as the orientation of the world to the east, and the encircling sea found in both

Tolkien's Ambarkanta maps (figs. 4-8) and the Hereford mappa mundi, as well as conceptual similarities, in particular the use of the limited, bound circle to reinforce the connection between mortality and the physical world ('Circles of the World' 11).

Although Fisher's argument is persuasive, the broader field that continues to categorise Tolkien's cartography as simply medieval is reductive, as it neglects the elements of his cartographic corpus that resist the medieval, and that are influenced by more contemporary practices. Examining Middle-earth's maps through a modern lens is more logical than it might at first appear. Tolkien was certainly familiar with modern maps, arguably more so than their medieval counterparts: in his essay "A Secret Vice", Tolkien describes a moment during training in World War I, when he was sitting in a tent "listening to somebody lecturing on map-reading…" ('A Secret Vice' 199). Map-reading was a key part of Tolkien's war experience: his early training in the Officers' Training Corps at Oxford involved one lecture a week and classes in signalling and map-reading on free afternoons (Hammond and Scull, *Chronology* 55); he studied from the book *Signalling: Morse, Semaphore, Station Work, Despatch Riding, Telephone Cables, Map Reading*, edited by E.J. Solano (1914) (*Chronology* 72); and he eventually chose to specialise in these skills, obtaining his Provisional Instructor's Certificate of Signalling (For Officers) on 13 May 1916, with a 95% accuracy on Written Examination, Examination of Telephony, and Knowledge of Map Reading (*Chronology* 80).

Aside from his expertise in military map-reading, Tolkien almost certainly also used maps in his everyday life. In particular, his fondness for walking in the countryside[7] probably led to a familiarity with large-scale topographical maps such as the Ordnance Survey. Although Tolkien never references using such maps as the Ordnance Survey on his walking trips, it is probable that in lengthy trips in unfamiliar places, such as his journey through the Swiss Alps where his company purposefully avoided main roads, or his family holidays to Cornwall, he would have used a detailed map for orientation. Moreover, many of Tolkien's walking trips took place with his friend C.S. Lewis, who was famously passionate about walking, taking an annual walking tour with friends which would last several days. Although there are no records of Lewis using maps on these tours either, a letter Lewis wrote to his illustrator Pauline Baynes regarding the maps for his Narnia books details that "[m]y idea was that the map should be more like a medieval map than an Ordnance Survey…" (Cecire 115), showing his awareness of these modern maps, presumably through personal use, and rendering it highly likely that his contemporary and fellow walker Tolkien would also have been familiar with them.

[7] In the summer of 1911, Tolkien, along with his brother Hilary and his Aunt Jane Neave, joined a walking tour in the Swiss Alps organised by some family friends, where they hiked along mountain paths, avoiding the main roads (Hammond and Scull, *Chronology* 27). The next year, during the summer vacation of 1912, Tolkien went walking in Berkshire, recording the scenery in his sketchbook (*Chronology* 34). In August 1914, Tolkien "explores the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall on foot with Father Vincent Reade" (*Chronology* 53). In the summer of 1932, Tolkien and his family go on holiday to Cornwall, taking long walks to Land's End (*Chronology* 164). Tolkien also went walking with Lewis, on one occasion accompanying Lewis and Owen Barfield on a walking holiday in the Quantock Hills in Somerset in April 1937 (*Chronology* 194).

The combination of medieval and modern influences in Tolkien's cartography is uniquely remarked upon by Stefan Ekman, who reads it through Umberto Eco's theory of the pseudomedieval, as discussed in *Travels in Hyperreality* (1973). Eco examines the way in which contemporary culture is infused with attempts to replicate and simulate reality, arguing that industries and technologies as diverse as Disney, holograms and Superman work to create what Eco terms hyperreality, an artificial reality which is more detailed and tangible than actuality, so that the simulacrum comes to replace the original. Eco applies this concept to contemporary culture's relationship with the medieval, arguing that while there has been a "return to the Middle Ages" in the modern period (*Hyperreality* 65), this interest oscillates between "fantastic neomedievalism and responsible philological examination" (*Hyperreality* 63). Eco claims that most literary and artistic products fall into the former category, reconstructing a version of the Middle Ages which is fictional, yet which is often read as authentic. Eco stresses that these cultural products adapt the Middle Ages in order to "meet the vital requirements of different periods", using them as a "mythological stage" on which to project contemporary ideas (*Hyperreality* 68). Ekman posits that although fantasy maps as a genre nod to medieval practices through certain stylistic features, actual medieval techniques are largely simplified and combined with modern techniques, in order to create a medieval impression while still being recognizably "map-like". Ekman argues that these maps therefore represent Eco's theory of pseudomedievalism, in

that the practices of the Middle Ages are evoked rather than reproduced and are underpinned by modern cartographic techniques (*Here Be Dragons* 45).

The aims of this chapter are therefore twofold. Firstly, I intend to nuance the reading of Tolkien's maps as purely medievalist, by demonstrating how they also draw from modern cartographic sources. Anticipating the following chapters, which consider how Tolkien's maps and narratives respond to contemporary socio-political issues, this integration of the modern with the medieval will demonstrate Eco's argument, that the medieval is used as a stage upon which contemporary ideas can be projected. This will place the maps within Tolkien's broader textual strategy that uses medievalist structures and imagery to address modern concerns. Secondly, and more specifically, this chapter will demonstrate how Tolkien drew upon particular political and ideological techniques, both medieval and modern, in order to create a tradition of mapmaking that is not merely representational or reproductive, but rather constructive: one that denies the neutrality of maps, and opens itself up to their socio-political conditions. This chapter will therefore begin with a historical overview of medieval and modern cartography, before turning to Tolkien's maps in order to illustrate how they mimic these maps' political and ideological encodings. Rather than reading all of Tolkien's maps through these lenses, a limited selection from his corpus will be discussed here; this is to avoid repetition as in the case of, for example, the Middle-earth and Beleriand maps, which bear distinct similarities. The focus of this analysis will be I Vene

Kemen, the Ambarkanta maps and diagrams, Thror's Map, the Middle-earth map (see Image Appendix, fig. 9), and the map of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor (fig.11). Through tracing the maps' textual and extradiegetic production histories, I aim to demonstrate how Tolkien shaped each map not as a one-to-one representation of his world-building, but rather as a vehicle for socio-political and ideological expression.

Section II: Medieval cartographic practices

Mapmaking did not originate in the medieval period. The desire to understand and interpret one's surroundings, and thereby to position oneself in the world, has existed since the prehistoric period,[8] and continued to develop throughout the ancient world and classical antiquity. Although, as P.D.A. Harvey argues, the relationship between medieval cartography and its preceding model from antiquity is at times difficult to establish[9] (Harvey 283), medieval cartography was nevertheless emphatically the continuation of a longstanding tradition.

[8] Catherine Delano Smith unequivocally states:

> There is no doubt that by the beginning of the Upper Paleolithic [c. 40,000 B.C.] man possessed both the cognitive capacity and the manipulative skills to translate mental spatial images into permanently visible images. It is possible to identify alternative modes of cartographic expression in the rock art record, ranging from the supermundane to the real world, for instance, and including perceptions of landscape from sometimes a low, sometimes a high, and occasionally, a vertical angle (Delano Smith 62).

For further discussion of prehistoric cartography, see Delano Smith's full chapter.

[9] For further discussion of the link between ancient and medieval cartography, see Richard J.A. Talbert and Richard W. Unger's edited collection *Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Fresh Perspectives, New Methods* (2008).

European medieval cartography itself is defined as those maps produced from the post-Roman fifth century through to the pre-Renaissance fifteenth century. It did not, however, remain static throughout this millennium, but rather developed continuously, engendering numerous distinct cartographic traditions and practices according to specific periods and places. As this overview of medieval cartography will act as a contextualisation of Tolkien's maps, it will focus on cartographic production in medieval England, with reference to wider European trends when relevant. Although Tolkien makes little reference to the sources used for his maps, it is likely that he would have been both more familiar with English examples, given his academic and personal interest in medieval English literature and culture, and more likely to base his own cartography on these examples, given his desire to create a particularly English mythology (*Letters* 144).

Broadly, English medieval cartography was informed by popular European conceptualisations of the world and spatial representation. David Woodward separates medieval European cartography into three key periods, each roughly aligning with the start of a new medieval renaissance (299). The first period begins in the fifth century and lasts until the end of the seventh century, and is characterised by three key cartographic traditions, named after the authors who popularised them: Macrobius (c. 395-436 A.D.), Orosius (c. 383-post 417 A.D.), and Isidore (c. 560-636 A.D.). The maps produced in these traditions were mappae mundi, or world maps. The Macrobius map depicted

the earth split into five climatic zones: a polar zone located in the north and in the south, a central equatorial zone, and two temperate zones, each sandwiched between the polar and equatorial zones. The temperate zones are considered the only habitable zones, and it is mainly here that the known continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Antipodes were located (300). The Orosian and Isidorian models took a less zonal and more geographic approach: known as tripartite, or T-O maps, they separated the world into three continents, with Asia located in the east (at the top of the map), bordered by both Europe and Africa, and encircled by an ocean (J. Williams 17). All three of these map forms had a profound impact on medieval cartography beyond their inception in this first period, with examples of their influence found in maps dating through to the Renaissance (Woodward 299).

The second period stretches from the beginning of the eighth to the end of the eleventh century. Thanks to the marked increase in production of manuscripts and texts for cathedrals and monastery schools during the Carolingian Renaissance, the maps of this period are characterised by a pronounced religious influence, leading to the period being termed “the golden age of Church cartography” (299). Among the key maps produced in this period are the Beatus maps. These maps accompanied the text of Beatus of Liébana’s Commentary on the Apocalypse (8th century A.D.). The extant maps are closely based on Beatus’ original manuscript map, which has now been lost (303). These maps are very like the tripartite model popularised by Orosius

and Isidore, with one notable exception: there is the addition of a fourth continent, called the Antipodes. The purpose of these maps was to illustrate the journeys of the apostles as they went forth into the world to evangelise the word of Christ (Riffenburgh 24).

The third period is relatively short, beginning in the twelfth century and ending in the final years of the thirteenth. This period was marked by a renewed influx of geographical and cosmological knowledge, as several previously untranslated Arabic and Greek texts – including Ptolemy's *Algamest* – were made available to readers of Latin. It was also at this time that Europe saw the emergence of its first universities: Bologna, Oxford and Paris were all founded roughly in the twelfth century, and the subjects which they taught – mathematics, astronomy, and geometry – were all directly linked to cartography, and to a wider interest in the physical world (306). This period saw the creation of many of the most famous mappae mundi, including the Ebstorf map (c. 1235), the Psalter map (13th century) (British Library Add. 28681), the Hereford map (c. 1300), and the Sawley map (c. 1190-1210) (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge MS 66), which in form were based on the previous Orosian and Isidorian models. Notably, these mappae mundi all have strong English associations or sources (Harvey, *Medieval Maps* 25).[10]

[10] Harvey notes that although not all of these maps were produced in England, they all have marked English associations. The Psalter map and the Hereford map were likely produced in England. The Ebstorf map was drawn at the request of Gervase of Tilbury, an Englishman residing in Germany. The original Sawley map was drawn by the canon of Mainz Cathedral, but was dedicated to an Englishman, and the only surviving copy is in the library of Sawley Abbey in Yorkshire.

Furthermore, the maps in this group show a shift away from maps as manuscript illustrations, and instead become independent documents; both the Ebstorf map and the Hereford map are sizable artefacts which would have been hung up and displayed.

Although the zonal model of Macrobius and the tripratite models of Orosius and Isidore were based on their respective texts' assertions about the structure of the physical world, mappae mundi were nevertheless not accurate diagrams of the earth or its landscape, and moreover, were never intended to be such. George H.T. Kimble discusses the false perception of medieval maps as vehicles for geographical accuracy, explaining that "[t]he great majority of these…[maps]…are to be regarded as works of art and not of information…[Their authors] would have branded any man a fool who might have supposed that he could determine the distance from London to Jerusalem by putting a ruler across a map…" (qtd. in Turchi 34–35). Wood and John Fels further criticise the failure of early cartographic scholarship in judging medieval maps by modern standards of accuracy in scale, distance, direction, and elevation, and thereby deeming medieval maps primitive and unsuccessful (Wood and Fels 6).

As Harvey argues, it was not only limitations of technique which resulted in a lack of accuracy (although these certainly existed), but also limitations of concept (*Medieval Maps* 7). As indicated by the period characterised as the

Golden Age of church cartography, and the presence of maps such as the Psalter Map in religious volumes, the purpose of mappae mundi was underpinned by contemporary theological and socio-political concerns: mappae mundi were intended to convey not geographical information, but rather religious narrative. Together, the symbols and structures on these maps work to convey an ideological interpretation of the world, one which is rooted in Christianity, the key ideology of the European Middle Ages. An approximate depiction of the world is provided in order to comment on and teach the narrative of the Christian experience within the whole of God's creation, and to embody "the Christian world view of a divine order" (Riffenburgh 22). This didactic and spiritual function is particularly reinforced by the form of the large maps produced in this period, such as the Ebstorf map and the Hereford map, both of which are free standing maps which would have been hung in a room – most probably in a religious building – rather than included in a manuscript, like many of the other mappae mundi.[11] The size of these maps and their isolation from surrounding text encouraged the viewer to contemplate and interpret the ideological narratives uninterruptedly, and to consider their place in the world both physically and spiritually.

Mappae mundi encoded these narratives in multiple ways. Woodward argues that the maps act as a compendium of the three main stages of the Christian

[11] Woodward approximates that around 900 of the 1100 surviving mappae mundi are located in manuscript books (286).

narrative: Creation, the Passion of Christ, and the Last Judgement. The Creation is symbolised through the three continents in the tripartite model: according to the Bible, each continent was peopled by one of Noah's three sons, making the tripartite model a reflection of the historic beginnings of humankind (334). The Creation story can also be seen in the representation of the Garden of Eden in many of the mappae mundi, including the Hereford map, the Ebstorf map, and the Psalter map. The Passion of the Christ is represented in the T-O layout of the tripartite model, with the T representing the cross Jesus died on (334). Finally, the Last Judgement is seen in the presence of "Christ in Glory" featured at the head of or encircling the world, indicating His ultimate jurisdiction over the physical earth (335). This is seen in the Psalter map, where Jesus is depicted at the top of the world, flanked by two angels, and with his hands held out in a blessing; The Ebstorf map depicts Jesus' head at the top of the world, his hands either side, and his feet at the bottom, thereby depicting him as both encompassing and integrated within the world.

Mappae mundi also embedded Christian ideology in their very structure. Many medieval maps placed East at the top rather than North, as these maps oriented themselves towards the Middle East and the presumed location of the Garden of Eden. In the Hereford, Psalter, and Ebstorf maps, the Garden of Eden is represented at the very top of the map through the iconography of Adam and Eve and the forbidden tree. The story of creation, and more broadly

God's presence in the narrative of the world, is immediately prioritized through the map's orientation. Other key Biblical locations also affected the structuring of the mappae mundi. Denis Cosgrove describes medieval world maps as "center-enhancing" (79), in that they placed what was considered significant and valuable in the middle of the map; frequently, particularly in the later Middle Ages, this meant centering the map on Jerusalem – the source of Christianity.[12] This practice is seen in the Hereford map, the Ebstorf map, and the Psalter map, which all position Jerusalem as the center of the world, both physically and metaphorically. Moreover, in the Ebstorf map, the city of Jerusalem takes up as much surface area as the entirety of Britain, reinforcing the map's emphasis on theological and socio-political representation rather than geographical accuracy.

Naturally, when the center of the map is encoded with meaning, so too are the edges. In mappae mundi, the further from the centre and towards the edge the reader travels, the more dangerous and frightening the territory becomes. The safety of the known world is juxtaposed with edges populated by cannibalistic tribes, monsters and natural disasters. In the Ebstorf map, animals become more fantastic towards the edges, with griffins and demon-like creatures portrayed. There are also depictions of humans eating human body parts, and

[12] Not all maps produced throughout the Middle Ages were centered on Jerusalem; Woodward points out that in the early Middle Ages, very few were. However, as Woodward notes: "The strengthening of the idea of Jerusalem as the spiritual center, a natural outcome of the Crusades, may have been responsible for a noticeable shift in the structure of mappae mundi from 1100 to 1300…[so that] the practice of placing Jerusalem at the center became common" (Woodward 342).

images of violent murders, which imbue the edges of the map with taboo and danger. In the Hereford and Psalter maps, the depictions of monstrosity are similarly rife, with mythical races such as sciopods (one-legged men) and blemmyes (headless men) populating the edges. Medieval cartographers would therefore respond to the unknown, blank spaces and far away edges of the world with uncertainty and fear, using their maps as a form of commentary on what was considered knowable, and therefore safe. This cartographic technique speaks to broader medieval codifications of space. Examining how manuscript pages similarly fill their margins with strange creatures, Michael Camille emphasises the politics of space and representation that were engrained within medieval art and iconography. Camille argues that medieval people were "highly sensitive to disorder and displacement precisely because they were so concerned with the hierarchy that defined their position in the universe" (16), channelling this concern with disorder into visual artefacts such as illuminated manuscripts and mappae mundi. These artefacts subverted social order in their margins, using the limits of the page to signify the limits of representation; in doing so, the edges worked to highlight the symbolism of the normative by acting as its foil, reinforcing its central position both on the page and in society.

Woodward's analysis of the trajectory of medieval cartography largely centres on world maps; however, it is important to note that other forms of cartography were present – if not as prolific – in the Middle Ages. Portolan charts began to

emerge in the thirteenth century and were a result of increased marine exploration, thus concentrating on coastal outlines rather than portraying any inland features, unlike the mappae mundi, which mainly focused on terrestrial features. The charts are characterised by intricate depictions of coastlines and criss-crossed rhumb lines for navigational purposes, created by marking sixteen equidistant points (among them the main cardinal points) along a circle which extended over the map; these points would then be joined up with intersecting lines (Harvey, *Medieval Maps* 43). Given the maritime nature of portolan charts, their production was largely concentrated in Mediterranean port towns. Although it is difficult to trace the origins of the very first portolan charts, the earlier examples from the first half of the fourteenth century were produced in the cities of Palma, Genoa, and Venice. By the second half of the century, the charts can, broadly speaking, be divided into two main groups: the Italian charts and the Spanish charts, with each tradition exhibiting its own uniquely identifiable characteristics and features. This means, of course, that portolan charts lie outside of this chapter's focus on cartographic production in England; however, they are nevertheless worth briefly considering for their unique and profound impact on later cartographic developments.

What sets portolan charts apart from other medieval cartography is their representation of and adherence to scale and direction, concepts which, as demonstrated above, were largely irrelevant to mappae mundi. Tony Campbell definitively states that portolan charts "were the most geographically realistic

maps of their time" (445), making them the closest relative to modern topographical maps which strive for geographical accuracy rather than the topological symbolism of mappae mundi. The grounds for this accuracy are rooted in the function of portolan charts; these are maps used primarily for navigational purposes, making precise, to-scale representations of the physical landscape of paramount importance. The style of portolan charts is largely defined by this function. As the charts were used primarily for seafaring purposes, it is the coast which is depicted in the highest detail, with little to no terrestrial detail featured on the majority of charts. The charts' rhumb lines are another characteristic feature derived from their navigational function. Although rhumb lines acted as a compass, from relatively early on in their history, portolan charts featured an additional compass rose alongside the lines,[13] as well as a scale bar. These cartographic features, which would become a fundamental part of future topographic and navigational maps, demonstrate the importance of accurately measuring distance and direction both for the creators and users of portolan charts (Harvey, *Medieval Maps* 48).

Overall, then, portolan charts contain considerably less subjectivity and symbolism than the mappae mundi. This is not to say, however, that portolan charts were free of socio-political and cultural markers. The Spanish Dalorto chart of 1325 (Archivio del Palazzo Corsini, YYef 2014-561) and the Dulcert

[13] The Catalan atlas of 1375 (Bibliothèque nationale MSS. Esp. 30) has a miniature compass rose on its left hand edge; this stylistic feature became normal in subsequent portolan charts of the fifteenth century.

chart of 1339, both drawn by the same cartographer Angelino Dulcert, feature a relatively large amount of inland detail compared to Italian charts of the same period; mountain ranges are picked out in striking green and blue, zigzagging rivers cross lakes and towns, and non-coastal towns are marked and named, often with a flag or emblem representing the kingdom or settlement. Campbell argues that these maps are more than ornamental, they symbolically signify the ruling dynasty in the area (393), acting as – to use Harley's term – value-laden images. By conveying information that is superfluous to their navigational function, these maps continue to position cartography as a medium that engages with and reflects back its socio-political environment.

The proliferation of portolan charts coincided with the emergence of regional and local maps. This genre of maps was relatively rare in the Middle Ages; the first regional maps did not appear until the mid-twelfth century, and even then, their production was limited. These rare maps can be divided into two categories: local maps of very small areas, and regional maps which cover entire countries. Of the former, very few survive from medieval England: from the mid-twelfth to the mid-fourteenth century there are only three extant examples, from the mid-fourteenth century to the beginning of the sixteenth century approximately thirty, and from the first half of the sixteenth century approximately two hundred (Harvey, 'Regional Cartography' 464). These maps vary extensively in what they portray; they include an 1150 plan of Canterbury Cathedral (Trinity College, Cambridge MS R.17.1) – the earliest

large-scale English map still existing –, "strips in arable fields, house plots in towns, rivers with mills and fisheries…[and] whole tracts of countryside including towns and villages" ('Regional Cartography' 484).

Concerning broader regional maps, very few that both depict and were produced in England remain. The most well-known examples are the four extant maps of Britain drawn by Matthew Paris, and the Gough map of Britain. Matthew Paris' maps are found in various St Albans manuscripts and were drawn in the mid-thirteenth century,[14] and have been categorized as the "first truly regional maps and the first detailed maps of Britain…" (Connolly 186). Each map shows an outline of Britain with a network of cities and rivers spanning across it, constructed around a vertical axis which runs from the northern town of Newcastle to the port town of Dover in the South of England. Suzanne Lewis has described Matthew Paris' Britain maps as "a genuine attempt at making a map in the modern sense of the word…" (365) in that they prioritize geographical representation above theological symbolism, being oriented towards the north rather than the traditional east,[15] and focusing on

[14] The first map (British Library Royal MS 14 C VII), an incomplete copy, is found in a copy of Matthew Paris' *Historia Anglorum*, a history of the English. The second map (British Library Cotton MS Claudius D VI) is the most elaborate and prefaces Matthew Paris' *Abbreviato chronicorum Angliae*, a short chronicle of English history; a third (British Library Corpus Christi MS 16) accompanies a copy of his masterwork the *Chronica Majora*; a fourth, rougher version (British Library Cotton MS Julius VII) exists in a manuscript of various St Albans productions (Mitchell 27–28).

[15] Several critics, among them Katharine Breen, have pointed out that this orientation may not have been a choice based on scientific accuracy, but rather based on the restrictions of the physical page of his codex: "Britain, being taller than it is wide…fit[s] within the traditional rectangular format of his manuscript codex…" (59–60). Although this may well be the case, this still demonstrates an unconcern for the theological implications of the traditional eastern orientation of medieval maps.

physical features such as cities and rivers. Stylistically, the maps present the same pictorial quality as the smaller, local maps of the period: Hadrian's wall is depicted as an actual, turreted wall, while cities and administrative centers such as London are portrayed as small castles. Produced roughly a century later in the mid-fourteenth century, the Gough Map (Bodleian Library MS. Gough Gen. Top. 16) is similar to Matthew Paris' maps, in that it shows an outline of Britain with a network of cities, rivers, and roads. Unlike Matthew Paris' maps, however, which are effectively an itinerary from Newcastle to Dover, with other cities and landmarks built around this predominant axis, the Gough Map does not focus on just one route, but rather shows an entire network of roads around Britain, situated correctly between an elaborately drawn river system, with a small figure by each section of road giving its length in local miles (Riffenburgh 73).

These examples make it clear that local and regional cartography was a broad and largely undefined genre in the Middle Ages, which encompassed numerous geographical representations. It is the regional maps, however, that come closest to a modern navigational function. Both Matthew Paris's maps and the Gough map are based on itineraries and portray ways of getting from point A to point B. The former are based around a single itinerary, while the Gough map takes a more complex approach of combining numerous itineraries so that the reader can trace their own route through the country, yet they largely fulfil the same function. These maps are emblematic of a pivotal

moment in the history of cartography; throughout most of the Middle Ages, this sort of information would be set out as a written list of instructions or descriptions ('Regional Cartography' 464). In the mid-medieval period, these itineraries began to be visualized; the most famous of these visualisations were drawn by Matthew Paris, and feature in the *Chronica Majora* (British Library Royal MS 14 C VII), the same manuscript which contains one of his Britain maps. These itinerary maps are a series of strips spread over seven pages outlining the road between London and the holy pilgrimage sites of Rome and Jerusalem through step-by-step illustrated instructions from one city to the next. The map asks the reader to follow the route up and down the page, similar to a vertical comic strip, thereby allowing them to "handle, manipulate, and trace their motions across the surface of the world…" (Connolly 6). What Matthew Paris' Britain maps and the Gough map achieve, then, is a reconceptualization of this itinerary in the form of the British Isles. This reveals a shift in attitudes towards navigation as a function of cartography: it becomes integral to demonstrate how these routes fit into the physical space of the landscape, rather than viewing the routes and the space they cover as two unrelated concepts. Although these maps almost certainly were not used for navigation in the way we would use a modern map, in that they were not brought along on travels, they nevertheless frame Britain as a navigable entity, and further demonstrate how maps can convey this kind of information.

Moreover, due to their itinerary function, both Matthew Paris' maps and the Gough map introduce the concept of scale, while never quite perfecting it. The first of Matthew Paris' maps includes a note that explains that the island should have been drawn longer, if the page would have allowed it (Lewis 365). The Gough map, meanwhile, notes distances between settlements in local (and therefore unstandardised) miles. Although the depiction of the network is therefore not to scale, the map nevertheless demonstrates an awareness of representing specific distances. As Harvey argues, from this it is conceptually "a very small step to set out the itinerary with its distances all in due proportion" (Harvey, 'Regional Cartography' 496). While this new interest in geographical representation does not have the symbolic potency of the theological mappae mundi, it nevertheless remains a value-laden depiction of the land, speaking to a gradually reconfiguring relationship between people and their environment. While the mappae mundi sought to execute power by sectioning the world into acceptable areas that fit the dominant theological framework and margins that "created, of necessity, a space for ejecting the undesirable" (Camille 16), the emerging genre of regional cartography sought to render the world navigable and controllable.

Section III: Modern cartographic practices

Modern cartography fully realised the objective of bringing the external world under its totalising control. Although in terms of iconography, cartography

underwent significant changes from the medieval to the modern period – a cursory comparison of medieval and post-Enlightenment maps reveals a shift from illustrative and figurative depictions of the world to a more abstract system of signage – modern maps nevertheless remain value-laden images, visually encoding and enabling particular ideologies through these signs. This shift to the abstract, and the use of simplified and regulated symbols rather than individualised pictures to depict the mapped subject, also represents the key change in cartography's purpose from the medieval to the modern: no longer concerned with conceptual narratives or theological contemplation, maps instead aim to accurately represent and reproduce the world, collecting, organising, and disseminating qualitative and quantitative information about topography and natural and urban environments. This attempt at a comprehensive reproduction of the landscape, pointedly ridiculed by Carroll and Borges, indicates a new value system based on totalising depiction and control rather than Christian ideals.

This emphasis on representational accuracy did not first emerge in the modern period – its roots can be traced back to the portolan charts and regional maps of the Middle Ages – yet it became crystallised as the primary objective of mapmaking during the Enlightenment. This is bound up in practical and ideological factors that mutually inform each other. On the practical side, the technological developments of the period enabled cartography's aspiration towards total objectivity. Before the eighteenth century, map making was a

vague art; map makers tended to create new maps based on amalgamations of previous maps, rather than conducting new surveys of the land, which resulted in new maps replicating previous errors (Hewitt xxii). Moreover, even when mapmakers did conduct their own surveys, their instruments were not yet advanced enough to produce the kind of accuracy seen in modern topographical maps. The telescope was not invented until the beginning of the seventeenth century, was not used in surveying until 1670, and from then until the mid-eighteenth century, problems with the lenses would produce inconsistent results. Other surveying instruments were also prone to inaccuracies, often expanding or shrinking due to temperature differences; chronometers and clocks would speed up or slow down; and the measuring scales which produced these instruments were not technologically advanced enough to calculate minute differences in weight, meaning the same instrument would often produce different results (xxii). By the eighteenth century, however, dramatic improvements in technology meant that mapmakers could produce maps with a hitherto unachievable level of accuracy, so that by the second half of the century, "Britain was home to some of the most precise map making and astronomical instruments in the world and the most diligent, rational surveyors…" (4).

Rachel Hewitt's description of "precise" mapmaking and "rational" surveyors points to the Enlightenment ideologies that underpin this new cartographic objective. Developing symbiotically alongside the scientific and technological

discoveries of the period, the philosophies of the Enlightenment became integral to the fundamentals of modern cartography and continue to inform the perception of map making and usage to this day. Harley argues that

> [a]lthough cartographers write about the art as well as the science of mapmaking, science has overshadowed the competition between the two. The corollary is that when historians assess maps their interpretation is moulded by this idea of what maps are supposed to be. In our own Western culture, at least since the Enlightenment, cartography has been defined as a factual science. The premise is that a map should offer a transparent window on the world. ('Early Maps' 3–4)

Wood and Fels meanwhile explain that Enlightenment cartographers believed that "a mirror of nature can be projected through geometry and measurement…" (6), while Jeremy Black frames the emphasis on accuracy as an "ideology", arguing that cartographic accuracy is "generally seen as an aspect of objectivity; an impartial 'scientific' realisation of reality. Most map-users see cartography as a science, a skilled, unproblematic exercise in precision, made increasingly accurate by modern technological advances" (*Maps and Politics* 17). For Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment cartographers, the emphasis on accuracy became equated with objectivity: the map became a symbol for the Enlightenment's rejection of subjectivity and its promotion of purely rational values. As Black argues, this in itself is an ideological position: as a map can never be entirely representationally accurate or objective – to which the stories of Carroll and Borges attest – the narrative of the neutral and truthful map works to make invisible the subjectivities that are still contained within it. Wood argues that "the map is

about the world in a way that reveals, not the world – or not just the world – but also (and sometimes especially) the agency of the mapper. This is, maps, all maps, inevitably, unavoidably, necessarily embody their author's prejudices, biases and partialities…" (24). By disguising these prejudices and biases as objective fact, the map becomes a means of creating a dominant power relationship between the mapmaker and those whose interests they embody, be that a nation-state, a cultural group, or the human species, and that aspect of the world which the map is purporting to represent. Wood and Fels set out to prove the inherent ideological nature of the "objective" post-Enlightenment map by examining how these maps depict the natural world, that "above all is supposed to be free of ideological construction", in order to demonstrate how even in this case, the map "creates ideology, transforms the world into ideology, and by printing the world on paper constructs the ideological. It doesn't matter what has the map's attention. Whatever its subject is will be turned into something it isn't and in the process, inescapable, unavoidably, made ideological" (7). In the case of the natural world, Wood and Fels argue, the map, its pretence at objectivity, and its actual subjectivity, become a way of claiming authority over territories and land, a project that encapsulates the hierarchy between human and nature that is the subject of the next chapter, and that found new forms of expression in Enlightenment thought.

Not only does modern cartography remain bound up in ideology in a general way as a value-laden image, but the conditions that particularly catalyzed its development are also inherently ideological. In Britain, the reconceptualization of cartography was prompted by the commissioning of the Ordnance Survey in the eighteenth century. Although by Tolkien's time, the Ordnance Survey was used by the public for outdoor leisure activities, its original purpose was a military one. After the Jacobite rising and the defeat of the Scottish rebels in the Battle of Culloden in 1746, the royalist troops struggled to navigate the difficult Highlands territory to round up the rebels. Hewitt comments on the inadequacy of military cartography in this period: throughout the rebellion, the English troops had little to no information about the geography of the Highlands, which was only "exacerbated by inadequate maps of the region…" (xviii). The benefits of an accurate, comprehensive map of Britain were quickly realised, and in 1747, David Watson, a Quartermaster General in the English army proposed a military survey of Scotland (17). By 1752, the whole of the Scottish Highlands had been mapped, and by 1755, the Lowlands were also finished. Impressed with the results of these surveys, and recognising their applicability in military matters, a survey of England and Wales was also commissioned, out of which eventually grew the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain (44). In 1784, the primary triangulation of Britain was carried out, and in 1801, the first Ordnance Survey map was released to the public, depicting areas of Kent (163). In the following several decades, the rest of Great Britain was also mapped out and published, and in 1870, the Ordnance Survey was

completed, at a scale of one inch to one mile (305). Throughout its initial production, however, the Ordnance Survey was already being improved; by 1840, a new series of larger scale, six inches to one mile maps had been commissioned (295), and in 1856 a series of 1:2500 scale maps (roughly twenty five inches to a mile) were produced, which represented the landscape in much greater detail (300).

The increasing scale of the Ordnance Survey maps in the nineteenth century shifted how they were read and used. The original, relatively small-scale one inch to one mile map served its initial purpose – to gain intelligence about an area for military purposes through a reliable and accurate representation of the landscape – yet it was not detailed enough to act as an informational or navigational resource for the public, who would have more use for a map of their immediate area, rather than a general map of a region. Hewitt explains that although wealthy landowners did buy the first Ordnance Survey maps, they did not serve any practical purpose but were rather used as "rhetorical images of power and ownership", or as aesthetic objects (167). The introduction of a larger scale map was rooted in the commercial rather than military or governmental demands of the nineteenth century. Widespread urban growth, industrial activity both in the towns and in the coalfields of the Midlands and northern England, and the fast-developing road and railway network throughout Britain were transforming the way that land was being used and negotiated (Delano Smith and Kain 221). At the same time, mass

tourism was becoming a more and more popular activity in Britain made possible by the railway: Hartmutt Berghoff and Barbara Korte argue that the natural landscape, both in Britain and abroad became a site of touristic interest in the nineteenth century, explaining that "Romanticism essentially contributed to the redefinition of nature that was needed to set up and establish tourist destinations…" (Berghoff and Korte 5). Urbanisation, industrialisation, and new transport networks that enabled mass tourism all brought about a demand for large-scale maps which could be printed and bought cheaply, were widely available, and which could be used for both administrative and personal activities.

Although the touristic purposes of the Ordnance Survey map are less overtly ideological than its original military function, the fundamental intent behind both – to reproduce the landscape as accurately as possible on paper in order to enable human navigation and control – embodies the ideals of Enlightenment cartography. At every stage of the Ordnance Survey's development, its need for accuracy was reiterated: towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Board of Agriculture, under whose jurisdiction the Ordnance Survey operated, appointed a Departmental Committee to investigate the survey, with the result that regular revisions were authorised, so that no one-inch map would ever be more than fifteen years out of date, and no six-inch or twenty five-inch map would be more than twenty years out of date (Oliver 18). An instructional manual for the Survey dating from 1952 meanwhile states that "[t]he object of

the large scale survey is to produce a plan on which no measurable inaccuracies shall appear…" (Oliver 11).

This objective is reflected in the abstract visuals of the maps: abandoning the illustrative tendencies of pre-Enlightenment cartography, the iconography is intended as a vehicle for the efficient conveyance of topographical and environmental data. The first Ordnance Survey map of Kent from 1801 did not provide a legend for the symbols on the map, but the symbols were largely self-explanatory: clusters of small trees indicated forest areas, while trees arranged neatly in rows signified an orchard. Buildings were depicted as small shaded blocks, and churches as a small cross. Notably, relief was shown by hachures to indicate the gradient of a hill, which eventually shifted to contour lines in later versions at the end of the nineteenth century (Hewitt 164–65). Altogether, although the symbols were to an extent pictorial, they nevertheless functioned as a series of abstract signifiers characterised by uniformity, synecdoche, and geometry: the trees were all a uniform size and shape, churches weren't depicted as a building but as an icon, and hilly areas weren't shown from a front-facing angle typical of medieval maps, but from above using hachures. Large scale maps meanwhile use the same symbols as the smaller-scale maps, yet by dint of their scale these symbols are further spread out across the page, resulting in large areas of blank space representing fields, or the gradually inclining areas between contour lines. The appearance of these maps, despite being theoretically more detailed, is therefore at first

glance sparser than the smaller scale maps, particularly in rural areas. These blank spaces work to represent the expansiveness of the landscape, and give the reader a sense of the vastness of nature. This purposeful use of blank space was a relatively new concept. Whereas in the medieval period, blank spaces on a map were encoded with an underlying significance, indicating the unknown, the unmappable, and the dangerous,[16] in the large-scale Ordnance Survey maps, large, blank spaces were reclaimed as a representational tool, with white expanses on the map giving a sense of the largeness of the landscape. Each of these symbols, from the uniform trees to the contour lines and blank spaces, not only embeds the topographical and environmental characteristics of what it represents onto the map, but also encodes the map's purpose of precise, ordered, and neutral reproduction.

Despite this constant emphasis on accuracy, it was and is necessarily impossible to depict every element of the landscape with the same level of detail, so that each iteration of the Ordnance Survey shows a different prioritisation of certain aspects of the landscape. After World War I, for example, a simplified map was produced; named the Popular Edition, it introduced a new and highly detailed road classification, but relied solely on contours to depict relief, with the result that landform information was less

[16] Naomi Kline comments on the Hereford mappa mundi's tendency to fill up all blank space on the map: "Each text, each image informs and dispels a fear of the unknown and replaces it with authorative evidence, and the limited number of spatial interstices dispel the horror of the vacuum ("horror vacui"). The idea of the map was to fill the spaces, to prove that the world was contained within the framework of Creation, Judgement, and Redemption…" (48).

detailed, while the cultural and commercial content of the map was emphasised instead (Delano Smith and Kain 224). The variations of scale also show a different prioritisation: the small scale maps give a better sense of the overall landscape, and in particular offer a better depiction of relief as the contour lines are shown close enough together to give sense of the sharpness of the gradient, while large scale maps are more appropriate for practical or navigational purposes in an immediate area, and prioritise a detailed depiction of roads and buildings. These variations in the maps' purpose demonstrate the curatorial power of the mapmaker in determining what is depicted on the map, and what it can be used for. Wood points to this selectivity as the primary characteristic of mapmaking, and as what indeed enables the map to work: the map curates its content towards a particular interest, which is then "embodied in the map as presences and absences" (1). These presences and absences give the map a focus, and allow it to function as a representation of the world that fulfils a particular role, be that navigational, imaginative, or political; yet they inherently render the map subjective and, by definition, incomplete. This is embodied in the Ordnance Survey maps; while they are accurate representations of the landscape, in that there is faithful representation of distance, direction, and scale, these maps nevertheless reveal the falsity of "objective" cartography's dream of completeness, both in how they were used historically, and in how they are constructed. By selecting what does and does not appear on each particular map while simultaneously affecting comprehensive representation, these maps remain socially and politically

constructed texts that, as Wood and Fels argue, are “inescapably, unavoidably made ideological” (7).

Moreover, the Ordnance Survey revisited its original function during World War I, becoming a major player in helping to form military strategy, reinforcing Wood and Fels’ argument about the inescapable ideological functions of the supposedly politically neutral map. The Ordnance Survey produced topographical maps of the Front from mid-1915, helped from late 1917 by the Ordnance Survey Overseas Branch, so that during World War I, as Black points out, the “overwhelming majority” of maps produced by the Ordnance Survey were representations of battlefields (‘War and Cartography’ 38). The Royal Geographic Society, at the time an eminent centre of scientific research, also contributed to the war efforts; in 1914, the Society was placed at the disposal of the Geographical Section of the General Staff (GSGS), a department of military intelligence and one of the precursors of MI5 and MI6 concerned with military mapmaking, map collection, and topography (Heffernan 507–08). The disciplines of cartography and geography were thus firmly bound up with military activity, so that the maps’ accuracy became used in the service of ideology.

Indeed, more than any other war before it, World War I realised the full potential of maps as a military tool. Lieutenant Colonel E.M. Jack, the officer and engineer in charge of all British surveyors and mapmakers on the Front,

famously declared that “a map is a weapon” (Chasseaud 10), and the realities of cartography during World War I validated his claim. When the British Expeditionary Force first arrived in France in 1914, there was only one officer and one clerk in charge of mapmaking, and the maps were largely unreliable. By 1918, the section of the army preoccupied with mapmaking had risen to approximately 5000 men, who produced over 35 million map sheets in the total period of the war (Black, *Maps and Politics* 154). Moreover, it was not only the British forces that recognised cartography’s military potential: in 1914, the German army mostly had to make do with simple, inadequate sketch maps and often found themselves entirely lost in the French countryside, before similarly realising the need for modern, detailed cartography (Espenhorst 83). Each of the major players in the War eventually had an official mapping organisation: in Paris it was the Service Géographique de l’Armée, in Berlin the Königlich Preußische Landesaufnahme, in Vienna the k.u.k. Militärgeographische Institut, and in St Petersburg the Military Topographical Section of the General Staff (Chasseaud 9). In the four years of the war, mapping became an indispensable part of an army’s tools.

As with the original mapping of the Highlands, the map’s military purpose was inextricably linked to an emphasis on accurate representation. This was partly informed by the overall cultural shift towards an exact cartography, but the particular requirements of World War I mapping – namely, accuracy of relief and gradient – were also due to developments in weapons technology that

dramatically changed the nature of warfare. As opposed to having a direct line of sight between a weapon and its target, much of the fighting in World War I battles was carried out through indirect fire, where the distance and the angle of an unseen target would be calculated in order to determine the trajectory of the shell. Accurate, large-scale maps therefore became indispensable for facilitating this type of warfare, and for allowing the artillery to find their mark (Black, *Maps and Politics* 153–54). In particular, topographical maps which showed the relief of the landscape, typically through contour lines, were essential in order to calculate the elevation required for the weapon to fire. Moreover, the new technique of trench warfare meant that any military intelligence that could be gathered about an enemy's trenches would need to be graphically visualised as the trenches themselves could not be seen, again necessitating accurate maps. The scattered nature of the war's battlefields also increased the need for maps: the French originally concentrated their mapping on major fortified positions near the German border where previous battles had been fought, only for a new, mobile warfare to take place, and these maps be rendered useless (Black, 'War and Cartography' 34). A comprehensive cartography was therefore needed that was accurate enough to accommodate unforeseen sites of battle and anticipate hidden military targets.

In order to accommodate these new demands of cartography, new stylistic features were used. Specialised symbols unique to warfare were developed:

a map legend from a 1917 trench map (NLS Sheet 28.NE3) distinguishes between standing and ruined houses, used and disused trenches, and different types of ammunition and weapon stations, revealing the importance of transmitting specific information as efficiently as possible. Contour lines were also used prolifically in order to depict the elevation of an area. These lines were used in combination with other elements to depict relief in as great a detail as possible: in particular, the British forces commissioned maps which employed colour, superseding the monochrome maps of previous battles, to further emphasise the relief of the landscape (Black, 'War and Cartography' 39). Colour was also very important for distinguishing between ally and enemy trenches: numerous trench maps draw the trenches of opposing sides in different colours, such as a 1918 map (NLS 51B.NW), which shows the British trenches in red, while the German trenches are in blue.

All of these stylistic features were employed to make the maps as accurate and readable as possible. Yet what is striking about military maps is that despite this semblance of total factuality, they continue to be inextricably enmeshed with ideologies, subjectivities and politics. Michel Heffernan comments on the role of the Royal Geographical Society in World War I, arguing that it "illustrates how geographical knowledge and expertise can become implicated in broader political and ideological conflicts, and how ostensibly universal, 'scientific' objectives can easily become fused with the narrow, strategic objectives of the nation-state" (Heffernan 522). Warfare, seen

both in World War I and in the conflict between the English and Scottish that catalysed the production of the Ordnance Survey, reveals how easily cartography could be appropriated for use as a tool in discourses of power. Unlike medieval maps, which prioritised the visual encoding of religious ideology above exact representation, modern military cartography focused on accuracy based on a particular subject position in the service of a political agenda. This subjectivity had practical and visible results in World War I cartography: Peter Chasseaud observes that British maps created between 1915-1917 would only show German trenches for security reasons and that British trenches were depicted on "secret" editions of the maps available only to officers, rather than front line troops (13–14). The realities of the map – what it depicts and how it depicts it – are therefore affected by the map's potential audience and the political circumstances it is created in. Military cartography is therefore never total or complete in its representation of the world; it reflects the cartographer's political allegiance or the sensitivity of the information it needs to relay. A map that Tolkien himself used during the Battle of the Somme in 1916 further illustrates this. The high casualty rate at the Battle of the Somme can partly be attributed to misleading information given to the troops regarding the strength of German barbed wire and the state of their defences (Bodleian Library 31). Tolkien's trench map depicts the German trenches and areas of barbed wire, with annotations such as "gaps in wire every 30 or 40 yards" and "wire here thin". These annotations were probably made based on information from captured German soldiers, with a "consequently dubious level

of accuracy" (31). This map raises several points on the question of cartographic subjectivity. Firstly, as noted, the dependence on captured soldiers for intelligence reveals that even with high level surveillance technology and mapping techniques, cartographers in World War I did not derive all their data using purely scientific means, but also collected it from unreliable sources which could affect the accuracy of the map. Secondly, Tolkien's own annotations on the map show how a map can be altered and reframed. The notes highlight certain areas as being of high importance or interest, and the elements of the landscape are interpreted for his or the army's immediate agenda. The map therefore becomes a palimpsest with layers of meaning inscribed by each creator and user, meaning it cannot represent an objective truth, but rather remains what Harley termed a value-laden image that visually constructs and is constructed by its socio-political context.

Section IV: Tolkien's cartography

As has been demonstrated, both medieval and modern cartography embed the conditions of their production, from their socio-political environment to culturally dominant ideologies, within their image. The rest of this chapter will examine the ways in which Tolkien draws from these practices in order to create a corpus of fictional cartography that fits within a similar tradition of ideologically informed mapping. As discussed above, this section will also argue for the pseudomedieval nature of Tolkien's maps by demonstrating the

ways in which Tolkien drew from both traditions, thereby integrating his maps within a modern as well as medieval critical context. I argue that Tolkien's cartography extends beyond mere paratextual and illustrative purpose, but rather incorporates ideological forms of mapmaking in order to place his maps in conversation with the political narratives of the legendarium, as well as to position maps more broadly as an innately political medium.

It is important to note at this point, however, that Tolkien's cartography is also a literary project that was informed and confined by practical demands. His maps were not only shaped by historical frameworks, but also by financial and material limitations set by his publishers, and by the efforts of his son Christopher Tolkien, who collaborated with his father and redrew the final published maps in *The Lord of the Rings*, as well as the map of Beleriand (see Image Appendix, fig. 13) found in *The Silmarillion* and the map of Númenor (see Image Appendix, fig. 14) found in *Unfinished Tales*. The paratextual purpose of these maps therefore cannot be entirely ignored, as they were both stylistically and conceptually shaped by other needs that Tolkien was attempting to fulfil, such as drawing the maps at an appropriate scale for the reader to follow along, giving an adequate number of place names, and having a limited number of colours. Strikingly, however, Tolkien often narrativised the elements that derived from material requirements, integrating external, paratextual factors within the conceit of a fictional, internally consistent cartography that further illuminates his awareness of the ways in which maps

inescapably convey political meaning. This section will therefore approach Tolkien's maps mindful of their paratextual context, while simultaneously examining how this is drawn into a broader framework of politicised cartography informed by both medieval and modern traditions.

Map I: I Vene Kemen

Chronologically, the first conceptually complete map – that is to say, a developed rather than rough sketch map – in Tolkien's corpus is I Vene Kemen (fig. 3), reproduced in *The Book of Lost Tales I* (1983). Although it is not dated, it likely originates from between 1916 and 1919, from the same period when the majority of the tales collected in the volume were written. I Vene Kemen, which translates to "The Vessel of the Earth" according to the Gnomish Lexicon, or "The Shape of the Earth" according to the Qenya Lexicon, portrays various lands of Arda discussed in *The Book of Lost Tales* – including Valinor and Tol Eressëa – as well as the surrounding seas and atmosphere, depicted as a cut away drawing of a large, Viking-like ship. The main body of the ship is Vai or Neni Erùmenor, or the Outermost Waters, in which lies Ulmonan, the halls of Ulmo, the Vala of the sea, and Uin, the Great Whale, who carried the island of Tol Eressëa across the sea. Above this are the lands I Noro Landa (The Great Lands), Valinor, from which emerges the peak of Taniquetil, Tol Eressëa and I Tolli Kuruvar (The Magic Isles), as well as the Two Trees to the extreme west of the map. Surrounding these lands is Ô and Haloisi Velike (The

Great Sea). The mast of the ship rises from the highest point of The Great Lands, from which flies a sail, featuring a drawing of the Sun (Ûr), the Moon (Sil), and Luvier (Clouds). Next to the sail are three layers of clouds, lavelled Vaitya, Ilwe, and Vilna; these are the different layers of the earth's air which encompass the world (Tolkien, *Lost Tales I* 85–86).

I Vene Kemen is certainly the most unique and least realistic of Tolkien's maps. As Fimi argues, it very clearly taps into the mythic tone of *The Book of Lost Tales* (*Tolkien, Race and Cultural History* 124), and was an experimental idea which was quickly abandoned. No trace of the earth as ship remains in any of Tolkien's future mythology, although many of the key ideas of the map – the encompassing oceans and air, for example – are maintained and reconceptualised in his later mythology. The motives for Tolkien's initial decision to present the world as a ship remains unclear. Christopher links it to a speech by Ulmo, where he addresses the Valar, "O Valar, ye know not all wonders, and many secret things are beneath the Earth's dark keel, even where I have my mighty halls of Olmonan, that ye have never dreamed on…" (Tolkien, *Lost Tales I* 86); potentially, I Vene Kemen was an attempt by Tolkien to visualise this idea. However, although the reasoning behind the ship remains uncertain, the structuring of the world in such a highly conceptual form is definitively influenced by medieval cartography. Although the I Vene Kemen map does not structure space after the manner of a specific medieval map, its

unusual form is informed by medieval ideas about the world and how it should be represented.

Fimi argues that Tolkien was drawing on ideas from North European texts of the Middle Ages: in the Old Norse Prose Edda, “four dwarfs support the sky, while the sky itself is described as the dome of a giant's skull set up over a flat earth…” (*Tolkien, Race and Cultural History* 124); in English Christian tradition, meanwhile, the world was conceptualised as the body of Christ, such as in the Ebstorf map, which features Jesus’ head at the top, his feet at the bottom, and his hands either side. Both of these examples demonstrate the medieval practice of conceptualising the world through a cultural – be that mythological or theological – lens, a practice that the I Vene Kemen map emulates by eschewing a realistic or scientific world model. In Tolkien’s mythology at this point, the earth is a flat disk, floating on a large Enfolding Ocean which is “more like to sea below the Earth and more like to air above the Earth” (Tolkien, *Shaping* 236). This conceptualisation and Ulmo’s metaphor of the Earth’s dark keel work together to represent the world as a ship, much as the other mythologies imagined the world – either allegorically or literally – as a body or a skull. Moreover, whether or not the I Vene Kemen map was specifically visualising Ulmo’s comment, it nevertheless speaks to his characterisation of the world as complex, mysterious, and unknown. Much as with medieval mappae mundi, I Vene Kemen is not intended to make the world more navigable or comprehensible, but rather to reflect cultural understandings of

place and space. At this stage in Tolkien's mythology, when the world is still relatively new and under both authorial and diegetic construction, its portrayal as a conceptual object rather than a topographically accurate one works to emphasise its uncertain and fluid nature.

Map II: The Ambarkanta diagrams and maps

It is difficult to chronologically place the next map in Tolkien's corpus, as certain posthumously published works remain undated, but it is likely that the Ambarkanta diagrams and maps were drawn after I Vene Kemen but before the maps in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.[17] The "Ambarkanta" is a short work collected in *The Shaping of Middle-earth* (1986), which describes the cosmological and geological properties of Arda, and its formation at the beginning of the First Age, and is accompanied by three diagrams and two maps. Like I Vene Kemen, the Ambarkanta diagrams and maps were not prepared for publication in the same way as those of his novels, so they too do not have the same paratextual concerns as later maps will. Furthermore, the Ambarkanta diagrams and maps are also small-scale world maps that illustrate the mythological stage of Tolkien's world-building, containing many of the features of the I Vene Kemen map, but they abandon the ship form in favour of a more familiar, globe-like depiction of the world.

[17] Although there is no date given for the "Ambarkanta", Christopher dates the "Quenta" that is collected in the same volume to roughly 1930 and explains that the "Ambarkanta" was written later, "perhaps by several years" (*Shaping* 235).

The first diagram (see Image Appendix, fig. 4) is a straightforward visualisation of the description in the text of Ilu (the world, or more accurately "everything") before the Changing of the World when it was turned from a flat disk into a globe. The world here is depicted from West to East, with very little aesthetic embellishment. The diagram very accurately conveys the textual description: the layers of the Enfolding Ocean and Air are all in the correct position and labelled, and their relative thickness is even maintained: the text explains that "Ilmen lies above Vista, and is not great in depth, but is deepest in the West and East, and least in the North and South" (Tolkien, *Shaping* 236), and the diagram depicts Ilmen (the sky) thinner at the top and thicker at the edges. There are some visual codes for illustrating the different areas' geographical properties: five small crosses depict stars in Ilmen, where "the courses of the stars" were set (*Shaping* 236), two clouds are set in Fanyamar, or Cloudhome, and Ambar, or the earth, has vertical, fissure-like lines to distinguish it from the air and water. The second diagram (see Image Appendix, fig. 5) is very similar to the first, albeit simplified, with none of the already few illustrations that accompanied the first diagram. It also shows a shift in perspective, with the map now oriented towards the north. The third diagram (see Image Appendix, fig. 6) is very similar in style to the first two, but shows Ilu after the Changing of the World, when the earth has been made round. The diagram now resembles a series of concentric circles, with Ambar – now also a circle – at the centre, surrounded by the same layers of water and air: Vista, Ilmen, and

Vaiya. The Straight Path, created after the destruction of Númenor, now passes over Ambar and through Ilmen. This diagram has absolutely no illustrative features: it serves entirely as an almost technical depiction of the structure of the world.

The first Ambarkanta map (see Image Appendix, fig. 7) retains the diagrams' depiction of the world's atmosphere and Enfolding Ocean, although the focus has shifted to representing terrestrial features: Valinor is in the western corner, and separated from Middle-earth by a sea depicted with numerous, closely-set, parallel lines. Middle-earth is then separated from the Lands of the Sun in the east by the East Sea, similarly illustrated. Geographical features are also marked out using pictorial symbols – lines of upside-down Vs represent mountain ranges, and the Sea of Helkar and the Sea of Ringil are depicted using contour-like lines – making this map the first of the early maps to use such techniques for representing geographical details. The final Ambarkanta map (see Image Appendix, fig. 8) bears a small note at the top, "After the War of the Gods", placing the world it depicts after the imprisonment of Melkor by the other Valar. This map is less neat than the previous one, but retains many of its characteristics, including the depiction of the Vaiya, the lines in the sea, and the rough yet pictorial mountain peaks. This map also makes an attempt at depicting a bird's-eye view of coastal outlines and land masses, rather than the straight blocks of land seen in the previous diagrams.

The Ambarkanta diagrams and maps continue the mythology of a flat earth – eventually made round – that was depicted in I Vene Kemen, yet their layout is far less allegorical. Instead, the five figures emulate the appearance of mappae mundi. The three Ambarkanta diagrams are reminiscent of the Macrobian, or zonal, mappae mundi, which split the world up into five climactic zones; in the same way, the Ambarkanta diagrams attempt to map out the non-terrestrial, atmospheric conditions of the world and its surroundings by demarcating the atmospheric zones of Arda. The Ambarkanta maps meanwhile are more akin to the Isodorian, or T-O, maps, such as the Hereford or Ebstorf mappae mundi. Drawing on the Macrobian model, Isodorian maps still gesture towards non-terrestrial features – Fisher points out that the Hereford map is surrounded by a layer of water, much as Arda is surrounded by Vaiya, the Enfolding Ocean (Fisher, 'Circles of the World' 13) – but also detail the structure of the surface, sketching out land, sea, and geographical features. In particular, map IV's layout of the land recalls that of the Isodorian mappae mundi: it is not geographically accurate and does not attempt any neat outline; rather, it splits the world longitudinally into zones of land and sea, thereby showing their position in relation to each other, while not attempting any fidelity of surface area or shape. Map V, meanwhile, draws on even later mapmaking techniques, such as the regional maps and even the portolan charts, in its depiction of land mass: while it does not approach the accuracy of the latter, it does attempt to map out the shape of the continents in an increasingly precise way.

Despite their visual similarities, however, the Ambarkanta diagrams and maps do not strictly reproduce every characteristic of the mappae mundi. Tracing the evolution of Tolkien's cartography between I Vene Kemen and the Ambarkanta diagrams and maps, it is clear that the trajectory is towards a more modern, representational cartography, the conceptual nature of I Vene Kemen bringing into relief the methods of medieval world mapping that the Ambarkanta charts reject. Although the Ambarkanta maps closely resemble the mappae mundi stylistically through their rounded shape and zonal structure, they lack the theological underpinnings that characterised the mappae mundi, whether through their allegorical layout or pictorial symbolism. Given the geological nature of the text they accompany, certain diagrams and maps take on a more scientifically representational purpose: as discussed above, although map IV does not make any gesture to accuracy or scale, map V begins to chart outlines of land masses and topographical details such as mountain ranges in the spaces where they should appear. Diagram III, meanwhile, depicts the earth after it was globed and thus features a cutaway perspective that, combined with the maps' lack of pictorial symbolism, is more reminiscent of modern geological charts. The Ambarkanta diagrams and maps are thus emblematic of the pseudomedieval nature of Tolkien's cartography, as put forward by Ekman. There is no denying the overt medieval influence on the stylisation of these maps, but closer inspection reveals this influence to be mostly aesthetic rather than conceptual in character, seen in the charts' lack

of theological or mythological symbolism, particularly when compared with I Vene Kemen. Meanwhile, an emerging late medieval and modern influence can be traced within the maps through their engagement with more accurate representation. It is notable that the Ambarkanta diagrams and maps are concerned with materially reproducing the shifts in geology and geography that occur at this stage in Tolkien's world-building; given the particularly unpredictable state of the world's makeup in this period, this could be read diagetically as an attempt to map control over these changes in the manner of modern cartography.[18]

Map III: Thror's Map

The first of Tolkien's published maps in this corpus, Thror's Map (fig. 1) was one of five that Tolkien sent to his publishers to be included in *The Hobbit*. The other maps were the Wilderland (see Image Appendix, fig. 12), which also made it into the final published version, a map of the Misty Mountains and the Great River, one of the Lonely Mountain and its surroundings, and one of the Long Lake (Hammond and Scull, *Art of Hobbit* 11). Tolkien eventually decided that the latter three maps were "not wanted" (*Letters* 14); Thror's Map, however, was a vital part of Tolkien's narrative and cartographic construction of *The Hobbit* from the very beginning. The first attempt at Thror's Map appears

[18] This forms the core argument of the third chapter of this thesis, and is discussed more fully then.

in the original manuscript of *The Hobbit*, when it was known as Fimbulfambi's map, Thror's original name. John D. Rateliff notes that although this map differs "in significant details from the final version, it is remarkable how many permanent elements were already present and persisted from this first hasty sketch…" (*The History of the Hobbit* 18). The mountain is marked with six spurs outlined in hachures, with the River Running leading away to the right of the mountain. Lake Town is located on another branch of the river lower down, and the ruins of Dale are also marked. A sinister hand points to the mountain, although in this version it is more detailed and individualised, with long, pointed nails and shading around the bent fingers and knuckles. Runes below the hand explain "FANG THE SECRET PASSAGE OF THE DWARVES" (Hammond and Scull, *Art of Hobbit* 49), and just below in English are the inscriptions which would eventually become the runes and moon letters in the final map.

A later version of the map bears far more resemblance to the final product. Rather than a sketch made at the edge of a page of writing, this map is a more purposeful drawing, taking up an entire page. Unlike the first draft, which may have been used as a working map for Tolkien's own planning, this map is clearly intended as a draft of artwork for the final published book: its overall appearance is neater, it is on its own page, and most importantly, the inscription in the bottom-left corner, which reads "Thror's Map. Copied by B. Baggins. For moon runes hold up to the light" indicates that the map is intended for external readers, Tolkien having planned at this stage to have the moon

letters printed faintly on the back of the map, so that they would be seen when held up to light (*Art of Hobbit* 49). This inscription also introduces the notion of the printed map in *The Hobbit* replicating the map described in the text, by framing it as an artefact reproduced from Bilbo's collections. Stylistically, the map has also developed greatly; the mountain is still very similar, with hachures used to depict the six spurs, but the now iconic dragon is marked in red ink on its peak. The river has been unified and is now one branch running southward, with Dale and the Long Lake still marked. The runes are written more neatly around a simplified hand. Perhaps the most striking difference here is the emphasis on historicisation and exposition that is characteristic of the final map: arrows indicate the direction of Mirkwood, the Grey Mountains, Withered Heath, and the Iron Hills of Dain off the sides of the map, and two labels proclaim, "here of old was the land of Thrain King under the Mountain", and "here is the Desolation of Smaug", written in stylised, archaic script.

Publishing restrictions, however, somewhat altered the appearance of the final map. Tolkien had hoped that Thror's Map would be "tipped in (folded) in Chapter I, opposite the first mention of it: 'a piece of parchment rather like a map'" (*Letters* 15). However, his publishers decided instead to print both Thror's Map and the map of the Wilderland as endpapers, which meant the moon letters could no longer be printed on the reverse. Instead, the letters were printed on the front in a hollow font, in order to have a more ephemeral appearance. For the map to fit better to the size and layout of an endpaper,

which has a landscape rather than portrait orientation, Tolkien rotated his map ninety degrees, which meant that east now faced the top. Stylistically speaking, this final map is both textually and pictorially far more complex than any of the previous iterations. The script has become even more elaborate, with many of the capital letters featuring double minims. The map contains even more written information, at times non-geographical: the reader is informed that Mirkwood contains spiders; Lake Town is also referred to as Esgaroth and it is specified that Men dwell there; the Withered Heath is identified as where the dragons came from; and Girion's location in Dale is labelled. Pictorially, there is also much to note: as well as the illustration of Smaug now flying above the mountain, there is also another dragon next to the label about the "Great Worms"; the mountain itself is now drawn from a face-on perspective, rather than with hachures; drawings of withered tree stumps visually reinforce the Desolation of Smaug, while spiders' webs and a small spider complement the warning of spiders near Mirkwood.

Thror's Map represents a return to medieval cartography, both aesthetically and conceptually, aligning particularly with the medieval tradition of itinerary maps. To begin with, although the map covers a larger area than many medieval regional maps, encompassing numerous large geographical features such as a mountain, two large stretches of river, and a wasteland, its area of focus is nevertheless limited to what is relevant to the dwarves' journey, depicting just the Lonely Mountain and its environs, with surrounding areas

indicated off the edge of the map. This narrow focus is further emphasised by the lack of detail on the map: aside from the few geographic features discussed above, the map relies on its runes to convey information. Both textually and pictorially, Thror's Map is therefore intended to aid the reader in reaching the Lonely Mountain and locating the hidden door, a purpose that is further established by the way the map is diagetically used within the text by the characters. Although Thror's Map lacks the intricate road networks which characterise medieval itinerary maps such as the Matthew Paris maps of Britain or the Gough Map, its combination of step-by-step textual instructions, illustration of geographical features, and focus on a specific destination (in this case, the door of the Lonely Mountain) demonstrates how it acts navigationally as an itinerary map. The map's itinerary construction also fulfils a generic function: as *The Hobbit* is fundamentally a quest narrative, the itinerary map's allowance for navigation within a particular route makes it the ideal paratext for the genre.

This medieval conceptualisation of navigational function is then reflected in the map's visual and structural framework, which also largely tends to the medieval. The medieval aesthetic is primarily achieved through the use of illustrations rather than abstract symbols to convey information about the landscape: Matthew Paris' itinerary map from London to Palestine represents urban areas through individual, face-on illustrations of buildings, while the Gough Map represents towns as a combination of small houses and larger

buildings, lakes such as Loch Tay in Scotland as green circles detailed with wavy lines, and mountains to the north of the loch as a self-contained range of five mounds. Thror's Map is a prime example of this tendency to the pictorial, seen in its illustrations of the Lonely Mountain, the withered trees, the dragons, and the spiders' webs near Mirkwood; the development of the Lonely Mountain from initial draft to the final map particularly highlights the use of pictorial symbols as a visual choice. Crucially, however, these pictorial markers fulfil functions other than the aesthetic, conveying ideological information in the same way that mappae mundi did. The dragon, initially not depicted on the first draft map, takes up increasing space with each successive draft, and appears in its largest form in red ink on the complete map; its vivid presence signals the domination of the mountain by the dragon, and centers the map's purpose on its removal. The violence that the dragon has wreaked is emphasized by the burnt trees throughout the Desolation of Smaug; again, these were added only in the third sketch but their presence on the map reinforces the shift in political control over the Mountain and the broader, in this case environmental, effects that this has had, incentivizing the dwarves to follow the map's itinerary and fulfil the quest. Other illustrations mark out the ways in which the land is occupied and controlled, and act as warnings for the reader: the second dragon on the map points to the Grey Mountains where other dragons might be, while the spider's web in the bottom corner of the map highlights the potentially lethal consequences of entering Mirkwood. The hand on the edge of the map pointing towards the runes, meanwhile, echoes the manicules

found in medieval manuscripts, intended to draw attention to particular sections of the text: its presence on Thror's Map demonstrates how the map is fundamentally designed to direct the reader's understanding of it. Rather than engaging with theological perspectives, Thror's Map embeds political narratives through its iconography, thus maintaining medieval cartography's inherently ideological visual language.

Structurally, Thror's Map is also influenced primarily by mappae mundi and their tendency to inscribe meaning into their layout, through their orientation towards the East, as seen in the Ebstorf map and the Hereford map, and in their relegation of unknown areas to the edges of the map. As discussed above, Thror's Map's orientation towards the East was purely a result of publishing restrictions based on financial costs, however, Tolkien integrated this change within his mythology, explaining in the preface to the 1966 edition of *The Hobbit* that this was "usual in dwarf maps…" (Hammond and Scull, *Art of Hobbit* 55). This retrospective rewriting demonstrates Tolkien's awareness of the ways in which maps structurally convey signification; although Thror's Map was not specifically influenced by medieval cartography's orientation towards the east, it nevertheless acknowledges the ways in which cartography constructs and signifies space. It is most deliberately medieval in its encoding of danger at the fringes of the map, embodying Camille's argument about the medieval politics of spatial representation. On the map, arrows point down towards Mirkwood and towards the Grey Mountains, warning "West lies

Mirkwood the Great there are Spiders" and "whence came the Great Worms", mimicking the symbolic construction of medieval cartography. Much as the Ebstorf mappa mundi populated its edges with the unknown and monstrous, delineating the limits of civilization using the limits of the page, Thror's Map similarly demarcates its maker's boundaries of knowledge, reinforcing the map's subject – the dwarves' ancestral home – as the centre of their narrative. Moreover, although both Mirkwood and the Withered Heath would always have been located off the map's edges, each iteration of the map makes both this and their unsafe quality more explicit: the first draft mentions nothing; the second draft has arrows labelled with place names pointing off the edge of the map; while the final draft expands on these place names to include the dangerous creatures (spiders and Great Worms) which reside there. By emulating this tradition, Tolkien creates a tension in his sub-creation between known and unknown spaces similar to that in the medieval world, which allows for an exploration of the pull between home and adventure which Bilbo experiences.

Thror's Map is therefore highly influenced by medieval cartographic practices, and in particular by these practices' ideological underpinnings. This is not to say that it is a perfect simulacrum of a medieval map, however. Its pseudomedieval quality can be seen in the compass rose in the top right hand corner – a feature not found on medieval terrestrial maps – and in its combination of practices from distinct types of medieval cartography, thereby

creating a generic form of medievalesque cartography rather than authentically replicating a single map type. Overall, however, it is, alongside I Vene Kemen, the most medieval of Tolkien's cartographic output. As Tolkien embarked on the more complex narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*, his maps became increasingly more intricate in the variety of sources that they drew from, as is seen in the Middle-earth map and the map of Rohan, Gondor, and Mordor, both of which embody a more complex pseudomedievalism.

Map IV: The Middle-earth map

In *Unfinished Tales*, Christopher refers to his father's draft maps of Middle-earth as "sketch-maps", a phrase which he later corrects in *The Treason of Isengard* (1989): "this was an ill-chosen word, and in respect of the First Map a serious misnomer. All parts of the First Map were made with great care and delicacy until a late stage of correction, and it has an exceedingly 'Elvish' and archaic air…" (*Treason* 299). Although Tolkien did make numerous rough sketches of various areas of Middle-earth throughout his writing process,[19] the drafts of the small-scale, general map of Middle-earth are highly detailed and meticulously planned. The earliest of these, known as the First Map, is described by Christopher as "a strange, battered, fascinating, extremely complicated and highly characteristic document" (*Treason* 295). It is composed of several sheets of paper glued together, with redrawn sections of

[19] See *The Art of The Lord of the Rings* for further examples.

the map pasted over previous sections. This map is probably one of the best examples of Tolkien's cartography and his narrative developing simultaneously and symbiotically. In a 1944 letter to Christopher, Tolkien explains that he has solved certain problems with the narrative's chronology by "small map alterations, and by inserting an extra day's Entmoot…" (*Letters* 97). Much of the alterations are toponymical in nature: just to the north of Rivendell is an area marked Entish Land next to a note that specifies "alter Entish Lands to…Ettenmoor", which Christopher identifies as the first use of the name in the mythology; the River Iren was eventually changed to Isen, and Andon to Anduin, all of which are nomenclatures which are eventually incorporated into the narrative (*Treason* 306). Elsewhere, the changes are spatial in nature. In a draft of the chapter "Farewell to Lórien", Celeborn details that the River "will pass through a bare and barren country before it flows into the sluggish region of Nindalf, where the Entwash flows in. Beyond that are Emyn Rhain the Border Hills…" (*Treason* 281); a later rewriting amends this to "the River will pass through a bare and barren country, winding among the Border Hills before it falls down into the sluggish region of Nindalf…" (*Treason* 281). Subsequent iterations of the map represent this change: originally, the map shows a cluster of hachured mountains beyond the Entwash labelled the Border Hills; a small square of paper inserted onto the map redraws the area, erasing the Border Hills and replacing them with an area labelled the Brown Lands. These changes not only visualise the emerging narrative, they also reveal the map's emphasis on accuracy of distance and direction.

Despite these and many other alterations to the First Map, it remains – as Christopher notes – a decidedly aesthetic as well as practical document. Hachures are used for depicting the various mountain ranges, there is a detailed coastal outline, and colour is symbolically used, including small green treetops in Mirkwood, blue rivers, and red hachures around Mount Doom. In 1943, Christopher redrew this map along with "A Part of the Shire" (fig. 2).[20] Although this map no longer exists, Christopher describes it as "a large elaborate map in pencil and coloured chalks" (*Treason* 299), which stayed largely faithful to the First Map upon which it was based, with the exception of a pictorial style used for mountains and hills. Evidently, Christopher was opting for the pictorial form found in his father's *The Hobbit* maps and his own eventual published maps for *The Lord of the Rings*, even before the limitations of publication were introduced. This suggests that, although Christopher would have been motivated by publication restrictions, his pictorial representation was also partly an aesthetic decision, based on his father's previous maps and older sources, whose visual style he wanted to convey.

[20] Although it is generally known that Christopher aided his father before the publication of *The Lord of the Rings* in redrawing the maps, Christopher was in fact a key creative force throughout the process. Christopher drew maps both of the Shire and Middle-earth in 1943, and in various letters, Tolkien laments Christopher's absence during the war: "I wish I had you here…completing the maps and typing" (*Letters* 79); "my youngest boy…was carried off last July – in the midst of…doing a lovely map…" (*Letters* 86); "He was dragged off in the middle of making maps…" (*Letters* 112); "chapters went out to Africa and back to my chief critic and collaborator, Christopher, who is doing the maps…" (*Letters* 118). It is important to note, therefore, that Christopher did not merely take over the illustration process at the very end; rather, his maps developed alongside the writing of *The Lord of the Rings* and alongside Tolkien's own map-making efforts.

A second draft map of Middle-earth is undated, but was made when Tolkien was writing Book V of *The Lord of the Rings*. The map focuses on the southern portion of Middle-earth, and indeed covers much the same area as the map of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor. It is of a much smaller scale, however: it is ruled in squares of 2cm, with each square representing 100 miles (Tolkien, *War of Ring* 433). The map makes some use of colour, particularly using blue for the rivers and the coastlines, as well as red for certain annotations; however, the map's main emphasis is on the mountains, which it represents with intricate contour lines and opaque black shading. A final draft map was made after Tolkien finished writing Book VI of *The Lord of the Rings*, in September 1948 (Hammond and Scull, *Art of Lord of the Rings* 199). The map was divided across two sheets: a northern portion extending from the Northern Waste to the Falls of Rauros, and a southern portion stretching from Rauros to Far Harad. The maps combine a number of techniques used previously, including a compass rose in the corner and a scale of 2 centimetres to 100 miles; hachures and contour lines to depict gradients – interestingly, the northern portion makes greater use of hachures particularly for the Misty Mountains, while the southern portion almost exclusively uses contour lines; coloured pencils for the forests and rivers; and a more elaborate and at times red script for the larger and more important place names. New and notable elements in the map include the use of contour-like lines to depict the coastline and sea, and notes historicizing the landscape, such as "Here was of old the Witch-realm of Angmar" and "South Gondor, now a debatable and desert land".

In 1953, when Christopher redrew the general map, he therefore undoubtedly drew upon this map as well as the original First Map. Although the map is unarguably a product of Christopher's creative efforts, the debt it owes to Tolkien's own work cannot be denied. The style of the published map (fig. 9) very much emulates that of the Wilderland, in the pictorial, individualized depiction of trees and the face-on rendition of the mountains. The mountains of Mordor also strongly resemble an aerial sketch Tolkien carried out of Ered Lithui and Ephel Dúath. This map features a compass rose in one corner and a scale in the opposite corner. A later redrawing of the map (see Image Appendix, fig. 10), made for *Unfinished Tales* in order to incorporate new locations and to correct defects in the original map, also features the compass rose and scale; above the scale is the title "The West of Middle-earth at the End of the Third Age". This map also features contour-like lines in the sea, reminiscent of those first seen in Tolkien's 1948 map.

Wood cites the draft maps of Middle-earth in his discussion of the process of mapmaking. Wood argues that typically, maps as individual objects do not "grow" or develop, but are rather informed by systems and practices that change over time. The exception to this is literary mapmaking, which develops alongside the world and fictional cartographic practices that it depicts: examining the First Map and the ways in which places were renamed,

distances recalculated, and entire territories erased, pasted over, and redrawn, Wood admits that

> [h]ere we see not just growth and decay, but also development, for what J.R.R. Tolkien did was to continuously differentiate, articulate and hierarchically subordinate the parts of the Middle Earth [sic] he was creating…*interactively*…with this map; so that history appears here, in the way the map takes as given certain aspects of Middle Earth [sic] previously worked out, even as it – precisely – generates others… (30–31)

Wood's discussion of the map's hierarchical control over the broader text is only one aspect of how the Middle-earth map creates and encodes narratives of power. Unlike Thror's Map, which combines medieval understandings of navigational cartography with other forms of medieval cartographic structuring, such as the literal marginalisation of dangerous areas, the Middle-earth map's structure instead illustrates modern cartography's emphasis on accuracy and representation, which embodied a desire to master and control the landscape. The topography of the map is framed by a compass rose and a scale bar marked at 50 mile intervals, indicating its concern with accurately conveying distance and direction. The Middle-earth map is moreover heavily focused on toponymical representation: from large-scale territories, forests, and mountain ranges to small-scale villages, towers, and paths, the map is saturated with place names. Discussing "A Part of the Shire", which has a comparable density of place names, Ekman argues that "the map subjugates the landscape, brings it under control…" (*Here Be Dragons* 50); the Middle-earth map similarly

displays an intricate knowledge of the land that places the map in a position of epistemological control over the landscape.

This practice very distinctly draws on the traditions of post-Enlightenment cartography in Britain, where surveys and scientific measuring using new technologies were employed in order to create maps that could efficiently disseminate large amounts of information and thereby claim a complete knowledge of the landscape depicted. Both in the Ordnance Survey and military maps, the innate incompleteness of cartography was disguised by the presentation of objective details such as scaled distance and marked place names; nevertheless, these maps remained, as Wood and Fels argue, socially and politically constructed texts that manifested their ideology of knowledge through their very supposed objectivity. By imitating these techniques, noticeable both in Tolkien's meticulous attempts to maintain consistency of distance between the narrative and the map, and in the map's level of topographical and toponymical detail, the Middle-earth map similarly aims at a supposedly objective and complete reproduction of the world that allows Tolkien to regulate his sub-creation while simultaneously enabling considerations of the diagetic tension between the cartographic image and the independent reality of the natural world.[21]

[21] This is discussed in much greater detail in chapter two.

This modern conceptualisation contrasts heavily with the map's overall medievalist aesthetic identified by Padrón, Fimi, Hammond and Scull. Its iconography rejects the abstraction that would be expected from a map that is so intently focused on fidelity of distance and scale, drawing instead from the illustrative techniques of medieval cartography. The forests are represented by tight clusters of individually demarcated trees, and in certain areas such as the Trollshaw or Nan Elmoth, the species of trees are visibly different: some are shorter, rounder, and deciduous-like, while others are taller and pointed like conifers. While modern maps such as the Ordnance Survey certainly use pictorial markers for trees, they employ a repeated standardised symbol to indicate wooded areas; the Middle-earth map tends instead to the individualised depiction of medieval maps. In certain areas, man-made structures are shown in a similar, illustrative way: much as the mappae mundi and the Gough map showed houses, churches, and castles face-on, the towers of Barad Dûr in Mordor, Dol Guldur in Mirkwood, and Gondolin in Dorthonion are shown in profile, rather than from above. The many mountain ranges of Middle-earth also take inspiration from this style of medieval maps; although Christopher's depiction is more sophisticated than the slightly misshapen examples on the Gough Map, he nevertheless also depicts mountains as a series of peaks, moving away from the contemporary, contoured representation of relief seen in the First Map.

At the same time, unlike Thror's Map, the Middle-earth map does not make use of non-topographical illustrations such as dragons, spiders or manicules to illustrate political or historic concerns. Although its use of illustrative symbols is aesthetically medieval, it nevertheless tends towards modern cartography's emphasis on the stable and topographical, dismissing the distinctly subjective narrativisation that these additional symbols would bring. The map is thus a definitive embodiment of Eco's theory of the pseudomedieval: rather than an authentic reproduction of medieval practices and ideologies, it instead depicts a "fantastic neomedievalism" onto which contemporary ideas can be projected (Eco, *Hyperreality* 63). In this case, these contemporary ideas revolve around the ideologies of modern cartography, and the ways in which it creates and maintains a hierarchical relationship between the mapmaker and its subject based on knowledge and accurate representation. The Middle-earth map's large scope allows it to speak to these broader cultural questions; the power dynamics engrained within the map become applicable to Tolkien's wider sub-creation, as opposed to Thror's Map, which was defined by its specificity as an itinerary map. The commonly accepted medievalism of the Middle-earth map thus requires nuancing: the contemporary issues that Tolkien interrogates throughout his world-building – from the environmental concerns addressed in chapter two to the critique of power politics and modern imperialism in chapter four – necessitate the modern conceptualisation of cartography that predominantly informs the map, with the medieval in this case acting largely as an aesthetic overlay.

Map V: Map of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor

In 1948, while writing Book VI of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien also made a draft of his map of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor. This map covers the terrain where the primary events of this book take place, stretching from the East Fold in Rohan across to the region of Nûrn in Mordor. The map was drawn on 2.5 millimetre-ruled graph paper, with red squares ruled over the top every 100 millimetres. A note at the top reads: "Small Scale 100 miles = 20mm. (1mm. = 5miles) l Large Scale x5: 100 miles = 100 mm. 1mm = 1 mile". Hammond and Scull hypothesise that the small scale map Tolkien refers to here is his general map of Middle-earth drawn at the same time which focuses on the southern portion of the land, with the map of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor showing the area in five times more detail (*Art of Lord of the Rings* 205). The map was used to track Frodo's and Sam's journey from the Falls of Rauros down to Mount Doom, with each day of the journey marked as a number alongside the trail. The graph paper and the large scale of the map enabled Tolkien to trace the journey as accurately as possible through the landscape of Middle-earth. The map's emphasis on accuracy is maintained in its mode of representation. There are no stylised trees or mountains here: the terrain is entirely depicted using intricate contour lines, including the sea at the Bay of Belfalas. Colour is used to pick out features, including blue for the network of rivers, red for the region's names, and purple for the beacons of Minas Tirith, which are also

numbered. The map is also toponymically very detailed, with areas, settlements and rivers all labelled.

Despite the level of detail, this was clearly a working map, indicated by the note in the top left hand corner that "Entwash is too far east", and required changes to bring it up to publishing standard. In a 1954 letter to Allen & Unwin, Tolkien remarked that "[a] map of the Gondor area is perhaps the most urgent. I am hoping to get my son Christopher to produce one from my drafts…" (*Letters* 185). A few months later, however, Tolkien wrote in a letter to Katherine Farrer that Christopher was "too overwhelmed to help with maps", and attempted to redraw it himself (*Letters* 208). This proved difficult, as detailed in a letter to Rayner Unwin from 1955: "The map is hell! I have not been as careful as I should in keeping track of distances. I think a small scale map simply reveals all the chinks in the armour – besides being obliged to differ somewhat from the printed small scale version, which was semi-pictorial…" (*Letters* 210). Tolkien and Christopher eventually finished the large-scale map together, with Tolkien "re-scaling and adjusting" the measurements and Christopher redrawing the entire thing over twenty four hours (*Letters* 247). The redrawn map (see Image Appendix, fig. 11) is unique, as it is the only one of Christopher's maps to retain his father's contour lines, albeit simplified for ease of printing. This was potentially in order to visually distinguish the map from the Middle-earth map: in a letter to Rayner Unwin, Tolkien emphasised that the larger scale map needed to differ from the small

scale one, possibly to avoid repetition and to offer the reader a new perspective on Middle-earth. Nevertheless, although the map does eschew the typical pictorial depiction of relief, it does not avoid pictorial representation altogether. Christopher added the by now iconic clusters of trees for Firien Wood and Drúadan Forest, symbols of grass for the Wet Marshes, and a small tower for Barad Dûr.

Like the Middle-earth map, the map of Rohan, Gondor, and Mordor is conceptually a modern map, yet in this case, its modern structure is visually represented by contemporary representational techniques. The inclusion of a compass rose and scale bar once more signal the importance of accuracy, which is reinforced by Tolkien's use of contour lines to depict relief. Interestingly, however, the contour lines do not necessarily convey more detailed or precise information about the terrain of these territories: the lines correspond exactly to the illustrated mountains in the Middle-earth map, including details such as the lone peak of Emyn Arnen on the border of Mordor, and the valley of Udûn, depicted on the map of Middle-earth as a gap between shaded mountain peaks, and on the map of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor as a blank space between contour lines. The purpose of the contour lines is therefore not to depict the lands of Middle-earth in noticeably greater detail, but rather to give the appearance of doing so, and to present the map as more accurate. This was partly a paratextual choice – Tolkien's letter to Rayner Unwin makes it clear that he was attempting to aesthetically differentiate the

two maps – however, the choice also inevitably embeds modern cartography's preoccupation with control over the landscape to a greater visual degree than the general map of Middle-earth.

In particular, the map of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor closely aligns with the military maps of the early twentieth century, a connection that is reinforced by the map's clear focus on war: not only does it center on the areas of Middle-earth where fighting takes place in *The Return of the King*, but the sublabel "Battle Plain" beneath Dagorlad, as well as the careful labelling of the enemy territory of Mordor, suggests this map could be used for strategic purposes. The categorisation of areas from a military perspective is reminiscent of Tolkien's own World War I trench map, where annotations indicated the reader's engagement with the politics of the landscape. This connection between the map of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor and post-Enlightenment military mapping serves several functions. Firstly, it demonstrates the influence of modern cartography on parts of Tolkien's corpus, aesthetically, structurally, and functionally. Secondly, it reinforces the concept of the map as a socio-politically constructed document that assimilates and reflects back the ideological conditions of its production. Thirdly, it emphasises the connection between military power and violence and the land, and the ways in which modern cartography textually embodies the physical control over land that military activity secures. As Lieutenant Colonel E.M. Jack claimed, the map becomes part of the arsenal of war, and the map's accuracy is exploited as a

tool for gaining control over land and the people who live in it. As political conflict forms a central aspect of the legendarium's narrative,[22] the ability of Tolkien's maps to embody modern cartography's aspiration for control –as in the military aesthetic of the map of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor – is paramount.

These five groups of maps only form half of Tolkien's overall cartographic corpus; however, even this limited sample clearly demonstrates Tolkien's engagement with the historical role of maps in creating, embedding, and enabling ideological and political ideas. Tolkien draws on the medieval and modern periods to varying extents in different maps, thereby forming a cartographic practice that is dependent on both periods stylistically, and more crucially, conceptually. By replicating the techniques that the maps from these periods employed, Tolkien situates those of his sub-creation within a historic tradition of political cartography that emphasises the inherent nature of maps as "value-laden images" (Harley, 'Power' 278). This not only enriches his maps from a paratextual perspective, signalling political and cultural contexts to his external readers, it also opens them up to reflecting the broader political concerns that Tolkien examines throughout his legendarium, further emphasising how cartography is inextricably enmeshed with its socio-political context, even if this context is fictional. The following three chapters will build on this positioning of maps within historical ideologies by considering how Tolkien's maps work alongside the text to articulate narratives of the

[22] This is discussed in depth in chapter four.

environment, deep time and geology, and power politics and imperialism, in order to demonstrate the multiple methods Tolkien employed in order to engage his work with its contemporary socio-political context.

Chapter 2: Force of Nature: Mapping Environmental Concerns

That will never be:

Who can impress the forest, bid the tree

Unfix his earth-bound root?

- Shakespeare, *Macbeth* Act IV Scene I (1897)

Section I: Introduction

In *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (2007), Timothy Morton highlights the problematics of nature in environmental discourse, arguing that nature as a concept has been so romanticised and reified that it has itself become an obstacle to proper ecological practice, as environmental writers become distanced from the reality of the nature for which they advocate. Morton cites Tolkien as an example of this harmful ecological approach; he frames the Shire in *The Lord of the Rings* as a "world-bubble" and organicist fantasy, and argues that through this depiction, Tolkien promotes a myopic and idealised engagement with nature that refuses to acknowledge the wider world of global politics. "If ever there was evidence of the persistence of Romanticism", claims Morton, "this is it" (97).

Although certain descriptions of the Shire build on a pastoral and indeed – as Morton defines it – arguably Romantic[23] view of nature (although I would argue that this is subverted as the narrative develops), this chapter will contend with Morton's broader, implicit categorisation of Tolkien's work as persistently Romantic, idyllic, and depoliticised. In particular, this chapter will argue that Tolkien's engagement with environment and landscape can be read as a response to modernity and the burgeoning ecological crisis, by depicting a world where nature is frequently positioned by its inhabitants as something to be overcome or defeated. Instead, Tolkien advocates for an alternative where nature is understood as something beyond human experience, valued not for its aesthetic or practical possibilities, but as an independent subject that contains its own vitality and vibrancy. By framing diagetic map making and reading in Tolkien's legendarium as an expression of the human/nature binary, this chapter will demonstrate the ways in which the environment is distanced and "othered" by Middle-earth's inhabitants, and claim that these cartographic practices can be read as a critique of human interference in and control of the environment and by extension the hierarchical relationship between human and nature. In doing so, this chapter will argue that Tolkien reacts to this dichotomy by committing to an environmentalist ethics, in particular examining

[23] Morton's conceptualisation of Romanticism in relation to Tolkien is somewhat reductive, neglecting the Romantic relationship with nature that revolves around the sublime and the independence and subjectivity of the nonhuman world. It is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis to engage properly with Romanticism and Morton's contention, but see Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Romantic Tradition*, Kate Rigby's *Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism*, and Noah Heringman's *Romantic Rocks, Aesthetic Geology* for further reading on this subject.

how he empowers Middle-earth's environment as a form of ecological protest, drawing on the possibilities of the fantasy genre to re-enchant nature and resist the control that mapping represents. Tolkien thereby interrogates the hierarchy of the human/nature binary, imagining a world that is not idealised or Romantic, as Morton contends, but one that is empowered beyond the human, and aligns more with a deep ecological and non-anthropocentric view of nature. This chapter will thus position Tolkien's legendarium as the response of an author writing after the mass industrialisation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the environmental toll of the world wars, as an author writing – although he was not aware of it himself – on the brink of the Anthropocene.[24]

[24] The Anthropocene will not be referred to frequently in this chapter as it is anachronistic to Tolkien's understanding of nature. The term itself was only recently coined in 2000 by atmospheric chemist Paul J. Crutzen, in order to define the current geological age by the enormous and unprecedented impact by humans on the planet's geological and ecological systems (Nixon, *Slow Violence* 12). Nevertheless, Tolkien's engagement with environmental concerns mirrors many of the anxieties of Anthropocene thought and literature, particularly in his method of blurring and subverting the categories of human and nature, as well as his tracing of "environmental degradation to mistaken knowledge [and] a false world view (the supposed sovereignty of the human…notions of nature as inert resource etc…)" (Clark, *Ecocriticism* 9, 18) Moreover, although the creation of the Anthropocene as a theoretical concept post-dates Tolkien, he was in fact writing into and indeed at times overlapping with what critics now consider the beginnings of Anthropocene concerns and environmental literature. Although there is as yet no fixed start date for the Anthropocene Age, Crutzen traced it to the Industrial Revolution and more specifically to James Watt's invention of the steam engine in 1776, while others date it to the first nuclear detonation that took place in 1945 as part of the Manhattan Project, and the subsequent "Great Acceleration" (Clark, *Ecocriticism* 1). Meanwhile, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* – often considered one of the catalysts to the modern environmental movement – was published in 1962, less than a decade after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*. The use of Anthropocene in this instance is therefore intended less to place Tolkien within a deliberate tradition but rather to situate him within a contemporary environmental and political context from which he has hitherto largely been excluded.

Section II: Unpacking the human/nature dualism

The "othering" of nature that the characters in Tolkien's legendarium engage with is, I argue, predicated on the human/nature[25] dichotomy that has defined the Western world's relationship with nature for centuries. In allowing this binary to permeate his secondary world, Tolkien draws attention to the harmful power dynamics it elicits, thereby prefiguring numerous ecocritics who trace the current environmental crisis to its conception. At its core, the human/nature binary positions the human and the nonhuman as ontologically different, thereby engendering a hierarchy which "picture[s] mankind as separate from and superior to nature" (Whiteside 358), a state that Kerry H Whiteside emphasises as the source of much contemporary ecological destruction.

Val Plumwood connects the development of this dualism with a historic emphasis in the Western world on rationalism as the defining characteristic of the human, which creates "a narrative which maps the supremacy of reason onto human supremacy via the identification of humanity with active mind and reason and of non-humans with passive, tradeable bodies" (*Environmental Culture* 4).[26] By identifying reason as solely accessible to the human mind,

[25] I am using Val Plumwood's terminology of human/nature as opposed to the more frequently used culture/nature. Human/nature encompasses a broader historical conceptualisation whereas culture/nature is often understood as a product of Enlightenment thought. It is my intention to demonstrate, as Plumwood does, that while this binary may have crystallised in the Enlightenment, it has been entrenched in Western cultural thought for many centuries previously.

[26] Plumwood's interrogation of the human/nature binary in both *Feminism and The Mastery of Nature* (1993) and *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2002) is explicitly ecofeminist in nature. As this chapter works within broader ecological frameworks, I will not

nature is portrayed as unthinking, inferior, and compliant; the exclusion of nature from the rational realm thus establishes a hierarchy that devalues nature and leaves it vulnerable to human interference and exploitation. Strikingly, Plumwood rejects the prevailing argument that frames this dualism as a product of proto-Enlightenment Cartesian philosophy, instead tracing the inferiorisation of nature through Western intellectual thought to Ancient Greek philosophy in order to demonstrate a pervasive and inescapable historic pattern of domination and subordination (*Mastery of Nature* 72). Plumwood thus establishes this binary not merely as the result of a line of philosophical inquiry but as the fundamental way in which the human and nonhuman have related to each other since the beginnings of Western culture. Plumwood problematizes Platonic thought, drawing attention to the multiple exclusions that enable Plato's conception and construction of reason, and the ways in which the natural and the nonhuman, as well as other marginalised categories such as women and slaves, are intrinsically subsumed and dominated by the ideal of rationalism (*Mastery of Nature* 84).

Plato's depiction of nature as violent, savage, and chaotic in his writings forms a strong foundation for subsequent interventions on human/nature dualism.

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be engaging with this aspect of her work at this stage in my research, however this is not intended as an erasure of her scholarship's core argument nor as a negation of the vital importance of feminist and gendered readings of ecology and environmentalism. My decision to engage with Plumwood's studies despite the absence of ecofeminism in my argument is twofold: firstly, her unpacking of the human/nature binary is richly detailed and essential to my critical framework; secondly, rooted in her feminist approach is a broader critical and political engagement with various social power structures, which is again central to my approach.

Plumwood argues that there are three steps in the construction of this binary: firstly, the elevation of reason as the primary and normative constituent of human identity, thereby devaluing other human and nonhuman characteristics; secondly, the framing of reason in terms that are antithetical to nature; and thirdly, the fabrication of nature as mindless and devoid of reason, which simultaneously reinforces the dichotomy and also works to other nature, "disposing of an important area of continuity and overlap between humans and…non-human nature". This othering of nature through its supposed lack of reason was made explicit by René Descartes, leading to the intensification of the human/nature dichotomy that defines much of Enlightenment thought (*Mastery of Nature* 107). Plumwood argues that the deconstruction of the binary rests on decentering reason entirely, as by its nature reason can only be anthropocentric. Instead, Plumwood advocates for a broader conceptualisation of mindlike qualities that can permit a continuity between mind and nature, that is otherwise impeded by an emphasis on reason. In particular, Plumwood discusses intentionality as a means of considering the mindlike qualities of nature: a term which encompasses "sentience, choice, consciousness, and goal-directedness (teleology)" (*Mastery of Nature* 134), intentionality speaks to the complexity of the natural world by providing a varied network of ways in which these qualities can manifest, without resorting to the Cartesian binary of mind/not-mind. As all living creatures, plants, and natural processes possess a teleology or life-goal, "whose strivings, interactions and difference in life strategy are intricate, amazing and

mysterious" (*Mastery of Nature* 135), this conceptualisation both permits continuity between mind and nature while also acknowledging nature's heterogeneity, a perspective that the elevation of reason against nature denies.

Plumwood's analysis of the human/nature binary from Classical to post-Enlightenment philosophy thus makes explicit the ways in which the human conception of nature is culturally constructed. Her breakdown of the tripartite method used to create this entrenched dichotomy reveals the active and deliberate processes by which nature is deconstructed and reconstructed in relation to human perspectives and values. This process, and the ways in which humans construct nature as inferior based on their capacity to reason, also lies at the heart of Robert Pogue Harrison's critical overview of the historic relationship between humans and forests. Harrison primarily focuses on the ways in which forests act as sites of social and cultural meaning through the narratives that are constructed around them. Using various historic periods as case studies, Harrison demonstrates how these narratives recurrently emerge as a result of the human/nature binary that defines each period's relationship with the natural world. In the Roman Empire, forests were placed both geographically and culturally peripheral to the city. The forest – so called for being *foris*, or outside – acted as a foil to Roman civilisation: while the metropolis was administratively and civically ordered and thus represented the ideals of human rationalism and enterprise, the forest was a "res nullius",

where the absence of the human could instead be filled by the undomesticated, the disordered, and the mad (49). The forest as a physical presence thus made clear the boundaries between the civilised and the uncivilised, the human and the nonhuman. This conceptualisation was compounded in the medieval Christian world, where forests continued to be placed on the boundaries of human order. Although this continued relegation of the forest was typically rooted in its negative signification, the forest could also be occasionally portrayed as a sacred space. Fundamentally, however, it persisted that "[o]ne could not remain human in the forest; one could only rise above or sink below the human level", thus sustaining the insurmountable divide between the human and natural (61).

Starting in the seventeenth century, Harrison notes that the attitude to wooded areas began to shift. The material effects of Britain's rampant deforestation was being felt: John Evelyn's *Silva* (1664) pled for the reforestation of the landscape and drew attention to the absence of timber for Naval demands, which led to what Harrison termed a "changing landscape", both metaphorically and literally. There was a cultural shift in how the two sides of the binary were perceived, and by the nineteenth century the categorisation of the human as civilised and the forest as wild had been reversed: as cities became more industrial, more complex, and more prone to representing the darker side of the human, forests – and nature more broadly – were envisioned as innocent, bucolic, and benign (100). Yet crucially, this shift towards a more

favourable perspective on the forest was still firmly constructed around the binary of the human and nature, so that the city and the forest continue to occupy opposite poles of the spectrum, with the forest now acting as a foil to the brutality of the city. The border between the forest and human habitation, as Harrison argues, is thus consistently held up as a symbolic boundary between various human/nature dichotomies, whether that be civilised-uncivilised, domesticated-wild, industrialised-pastoral, or known-unknown. The latter dichotomy is particularly complex in terms of how it relates to the human/nature binary, as the boundaries between knowing and not knowing shift and signify differently according to particular contexts. The forest, and nature more broadly, can both be known, or attempted to be known – by being constructed, defined, calculated, and mapped – and unknown – by being rejected, othered, and mystified. In both cases, there is (paradoxically) a type of Foucauldian knowledge at work; in the latter case, although the forest and nature are unknown, the position of the human as the perceiving subject "knowing" and categorising nature's alterity endows the human with a type of knowledge and power, albeit predicated on nature's "unknowability".

The cultural construction of the forest as other thus acts as a display of power over the natural world, demonstrated in the ways that humans have physically interacted and interfered with the forest: the Romans eventually turned on the sylvan borders of their cities, deforesting entire wooded tracts of land that they had proclaimed "uncivilised" in order to create a unified, unencumbered empire

(51), while Descartes sought to empower human knowledge to the extent that it could achieve "mastery and possession of nature" (108), an ideology that Harrison argues was realised in the timbering projects of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (not as a direct result of Descartes' mission but informed by the cultural and ideological context to which he contributed). Harrison argues that this utilitarian attitude fostered by the ostracisation of nature as "other" and thus inferior has continued into the modern day, so that even modern day ecological conservation projects frame the forest through its resource and use potential. Ultimately, Harrison argues, "we dwell not in nature but in relation to nature" (201).

It is this dwelling in relation to rather than as part of nature that contemporary ecocriticism attempts to address. To the extent that ecocriticism notices the problematics that this dualism has created, it also seeks to deconstruct it. In particular, there has been a move towards decentering the human from the discourse in order to conceptualise nature as an independent entity with its own value outside of human concerns and constructions. Greg Garrard responds to the difficulties of balancing both nature's historic subsumption into the human and its very real autonomy, arguing that "[t]he challenge for ecocritics is to keep one eye on the ways in which 'nature' is always in some ways culturally constructed and the other on the fact that nature really exists…" (10). This move towards understanding nature as apart from human knowledge and experience and the rejection of anthropocentrism in

environmental discourse forms a key facet of deep ecological ecocriticism, which Garrard defines as a demand for the "recognition of [the] intrinsic value of nature" (21). This definition is reinforced by Ursula K. Heise who argues that deep ecology "foregrounds the value of nature in and of itself [and] the equal rights of other species" (167), thus rejecting the modern conservation practices outlined by Harrison that exist primarily in order to maintain nature as a human resource. Timothy Clark expands on this line of argument, positioning deep ecology as a "radical" movement that views "the essential problem [as] anthropocentrism, the almost all-pervading assumption that it is only in relation to human beings that anything else has value" (*Literature and the Environment* 2). Clark explicitly outlines the importance of decentering and indeed rejecting the human from considerations of the environment, a position also hinted at by Garrard and Heise.

Crucially, therefore, deep ecology does not entirely deconstruct the separation between human and nature, a standpoint that Helena Feder criticises as maintaining the very binary that deep ecologists seek to subvert:

> [w]hen ecocritical work has discussed culture *as such* in the last decade and a half, it has often been in the process of contesting a view of nature as a cultural construction…though this constructionist view of nature seems to 'undo' the binary of nature and culture, it often merely replaces one side of the equation with the other. (emphasis in original) (1)

Plumwood too remains sceptical, arguing that "a dualistic dynamic is often retained in positions such as deep ecology which claim to have escaped it…"

(*Mastery of Nature* 6). Feder and Plumwood's critique gets to the heart of the difficulties in progressing beyond the human/nature binary: there is an inherent tension in attempting to both acknowledge nature's autonomy, difference, and singularity without enforcing alterity that can subsequently lead to inferiorisation. Yet, I would argue, at its most fundamental deep ecology seeks to undo the appropriation, subsumption, and inferiorisation of nature by the human, deconstructing if not always the binary then primarily the hierarchy that positions nature as valuable only insofar as human needs are concerned, and places the human as ultimately superior to nature and in control of how it is constructed and allowed to exist. The tension within deep ecology is summarised by William Cronon in his interrogation of wilderness as a human construction: Cronon argues that although believing that the human is entirely separate from nature leads to environmentally damaging behaviour, it is "no less crucial for us to recognise and honor nonhuman nature as a world we did not create, a world with its own independent, nonhuman reasons for being as it is" (115). Deep ecology must therefore both acknowledge our connection to nature while simultaneously arguing that nature has value beyond human concerns. To amend Harrison's argument, we need to both dwell alongside nature and understand that this does not define nature's purpose.

Although Tolkien evidently would not have been familiar with these ecocritical theorisations, he would have been acquainted with the human/nature dichotomy as a cultural framework, given its pervasiveness in Western

intellectual and cultural thought. His concern over the relationship between human and nature permeates his writings; not only does he engage with its social and environmental effects in his sub-creation, as will be explored in the rest of this chapter, but he also expands on these representations in his letters, which more explicitly reveal his thoughts on the intersection between the human and non-human. In particular, the character of Tom Bombadil explicates the power dynamics between the two. Tom Bombadil is somewhat anomalous to the broader Middle-earth story: as Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans argue, he "exists…apart from or alongside the mainstream of the narrative" (18), largely due to his condensed appearance within the narrative, and also to his eschewing of the historical and social categorisations that Middle-earth otherwise exists within, to the extent that Tolkien himself referred to Tom as an "intentional" enigma (*Letters* 174). The ways in which Tom does not fit within the sub-created patterns of Middle-earth means that he is unsuitable for considering broader political structures or power, as he tends to function as an exception rather than a rule, yet his exceptionalism also enables him to act as a paradigm for human/nature relationships outside of these entrenched structures. Reflecting Tolkien's own views on environmentalism, Tom Bombadil acts as a foil to the otherwise problematic environmental relationships in the text, offering an alternative to the inherently hierarchical structures in both Middle-earth and the primary world.

Interestingly, Tom Bombadil's introduction in *The Lord of the Rings* at first seems to contradict the empowerment of nature that I argue takes place. His wife Goldberry explains his role in the Old Forest as "Master of wood, water, and hill", suggesting a power dynamic in the same vein as those created by the human/nature binary. However, Goldberry qualifies her answer when Frodo asks if the land therefore belongs to him, explaining:

> The trees and the grasses and all things growing or living in the land belong each to themselves. Tom Bombadil is the Master. No one has ever caught old Tom walking in the forest, wading in the water, leaping on the hill-tops under light and shadow, He has no fear. Tom Bombadil is master. (*Fellowship* 163)

Tolkien's use of the word master remains problematic in an environmentalist context, yet strikingly it contradicts the rest of Goldberry's speech, which otherwise highlights the independence of nature, and Tom Bombadil's harmony with it. Her comment that no one has ever "caught" Tom suggests that her definition of mastery does not rest on a power dynamic over nature, but rather indicates that Tom Bombadil is master of himself within nature, evading other people's gaze and control. Tom and Goldberry's belief in the autonomy of nature even spreads to their guests: as Tom tells the hobbits stories of the Forest and the things living in it, "evil things and good things, things friendly and things unfriendly, cruel things and kind things, and secrets hidden under brambles", the hobbits begin to reformulate their relationship to the Forest and to nature more broadly, "understand[ing] the lives of the Forest, apart from themselves, indeed…feel[ing] themselves as the strangers when all

other things were at home…" (*Fellowship* 170). This shift in perspective aligns entirely with the key intention of deep ecology to recognise the innate value and independence of nature. Liam Campbell further draws attention to Tom's complex portrayal of nature: rather than an idealised view of nature as inherently peaceful and beautiful, Tom emphasises its contradictions and realities, thereby depicting nature in a way that acknowledges its existence outside of easy human narratives ('Mr. Bombadil' 45).

Tolkien expands on Tom Bombadil's role in two 1954 letters sent to Naomi Mitchison and Peter Hastings respectively. In the first letter to Mitchison, Tolkien makes explicit the centrality of power in interactions between human and nature, and highlights Tom's rejection of such power:

> The story is cast in terms of a good side and a bad side, beauty against ruthless ugliness, tyranny against kingship, moderated freedom with consent against compulsion that has long lost any object save mere power, and so on; but both sides in some degree, conservative or destructive, want a measure of control. But if you have, as it were taken 'a vow of poverty', renounced control, and take your delight in things for themselves without reference to yourself, watching, observing, and to some extent knowing, then the question of the rights and wrongs of power and control might become utterly meaningless to you, and the means of power quite valueless. It is a naturally pacifist view, which always arises in the mind when there is a war. (*Letters* 178–79)

Vitally, in this letter Tolkien complicates the moral binary that his legendarium otherwise revolves around, underlining the control that both sides strive for, whether conservative or destructive. By highlighting the similarities between the two, Tolkien points to the inherent dynamics of power that define almost

all human/nature relationships, whether intentionally damaging or not. Not only does this encourage a more critical reading of even the most positive relationships between humans and non-humans in Middle-earth, it also reveals the extent to which Tom Bombadil lies outside of this power dynamic, as well as the importance of decentering the human and appreciating "things for themselves" as an important step to relinquishing this power.

However, this letter also reveals the extent to which Tolkien's language of environmentalism conflicts with current ecocritical vocabulary. In the letter to Mitchison, Tolkien points to "knowing" as a part of acknowledging the independence of nature, which contrasts with the ecocritical arguments discussed previously, where claiming knowledge over nature is a key aspect of constructing and controlling it. Tolkien expands on his approach to knowledge in the letter to Hastings:

> He is master in a peculiar way: he has no fear, and no desire of possession or domination at all. He merely knows and understands about such things as concern him in his natural little realm…he is then an 'allegory', or an exemplar, a particular embodying of pure (real) natural science: the spirit that desires knowledge of other things, their history and nature, because they are 'other' and wholly independent of the enquiring mind, a spirit coeval with the rational mind, and entirely unconcerned with 'doing' anything with the knowledge: Zoology and Botany not Cattle-breeding or Agriculture. Even the Elves hardly show this: they are primarily artists. (*Letters* 192)

In this letter, two things become clear. Firstly, Tolkien makes explicit his definition of mastery: it does not comprise either possession or domination, which are typically the criteria for mastery, but rather of knowing and

understanding the surrounding world. Secondly, this knowing is not contingent on control or definition, but is rather an acknowledgment of the "otherness" of nature – a term that again conflicts with an understanding of ecocritical and postcolonial terminology but in this case simply means conceding nature's difference in the same way that Cronon, Heise, Garrard and Clark advocate. Tolkien explains that this brand of knowledge – knowledge for its own sake, as a means of recognising the independence of nature rather than seeking to control it – is the sign of a "rational mind". Tolkien's definition of rationality is built on the ability to understand the complexity of the natural world and humanity's fractional place in it, rather than a denial of that quality to nature and the non-human, as per Western philosophical thought.

The contrast between knowledge for its own sake and knowledge as a tool is further embodied in Tolkien's thought through the Ents and Entwives. While the Ents maintain an entirely harmonious relationship with nature that is predicated on its independence and subjectivity, the Entwives are interested in domesticating and taming nature according to their desires. In this way, as Tolkien notes, Tom Bombadil also acts as a response to them, his engagement with "Botany and Zoology" contrasting with theirs in "Agriculture and practicality". Treebeard's exposition of the history of the Entwives in *The Two Towers* further demonstrates the harm that this pragmatic approach to nature can cause. While the Ents are drawn to trees and "wild woods…and ate only such fruit as the trees let fall in their path…", the Entwives are primarily

interested in agricultural plants, such as sloe, wild apple and cherry, "green herbs in the waterlands…and the seeding grasses in the autumn fields…" (*Towers* 619). The Entwives are not interested in pursuing a harmonious relationship with their environment, however:

> They did not desire to speak with these things; but they wished them to hear and obey what was said to them. The Entwives ordered them to grow according to their wishes, and bear leaf and fruit to their liking; for the Entwives desired order, and plenty, and peace (by which they meant that things should remain where they had set them). (*Towers* 619)

The Entwives' desire for pragmatic knowledge engenders a hierarchy between them and nature; nature inevitably becomes rendered into an object, whose only role is to "hear and obey". The Entwives' rigid approach to their environment denies it any independence or intentionality, and entirely contrasts Tom Bombadil and the hobbits' understanding of nature as something "apart from themselves" (*Fellowship* 170). The centering of themselves and their desires opposes both Tolkien's framing of the "rational mind" and the principles of deep ecology, which together advocate an acknowledgement of the independence of nature and a rejection of control.

At their heart, although in terminology they appear to conflict with the previous environmentalist frameworks outlined in this chapter, Tolkien's critical interventions on this topic in fact align. Although Harrison, Plumwood and others build on a Foucauldian definition of knowledge, where it – defined either as attempting to gain comprehension over something or by claiming

knowledge of its alterity and fundamental opposition to the self, and thus positioning the self as the perceiving, judging, constructing subject – equates to an attempt to gain power, Tolkien uses it differently. He distinguishes between knowledge for its own sake and knowledge for exploitation and control, making it clear that in his sub-creation, it is only Tom Bombadil who abides by the former. Tom Bombadil's lack of interest in "'doing' anything with the knowledge" (Tolkien, *Letters* 192) speaks to a divide in attitudes to nature, between those who only see nature's use-value (the Entwives being a prime example), and those who acknowledge its intrinsic value.

The rest of this chapter will examine how Tolkien's sub-creation responds to the divide between the human and the natural, read through both an ecocritical lens as well as Tolkien's own approach to knowledge, power, and nature. In order to make this chapter more broadly applicable, I will be relying on the terminology used in ecocritical theory – that is to say, rationalism will be used according to Plumwood's definition, knowledge will be used in a Foucauldian sense to mean those kinds of knowing that lie outside of Tom Bombadil's practice. Although the vocabulary may differ at times, as has been demonstrated, the principles nevertheless align. In particular, the "measure of control" that Tolkien discusses in his letter to Mitchison lies at the heart of this chapter, and speaks to the binary that exists in his sub-creation. His Middle-earth texts center on humans and humanoid creatures living, often uncomfortably, in relation to their environment, depicting a version of the

dualism and hierarchy that structured his own world and its harmful relationship to the environment. Tolkien's comment that both sides to "some degree…want a measure of control" indicates a spectrum of power over the environment, from those who simply practise harmful systems of knowing in order to frame the natural world as "other", to those who want complete mastery of it, to the extent that they enact active damage to the environment. Tolkien's legendarium features interactions with the natural world along this spectrum, the more extreme instances revealing an engagement with narratives of environmental destruction that mirror those of the primary world, and demonstrating how Tolkien critiques both its cultural and tangible effects. Tolkien's environmentalist stance is made explicit in letters that speak more broadly to his active interest in protecting the environment: on one occasion, he claims that "in all my works I take the part of trees against all their enemies" (*Letters* 339), while on another he responds to a film treatment of *The Lord of the Rings*, lamenting that the filmmaker is not "interested in trees: unfortunate, since the story is so largely concerned with them…" (*Letters* 210).

This chapter will therefore examine the tension at play between the human and the natural in both its, to borrow Tolkien's own words, conservative and environmentally destructive guises, using Middle-earth's cartography as a lens through which to examine the representation of human rationalism and its construction as dichotomous to the natural world. Cartography is particularly suited to this as it is itself a human and cultural construction of nature that, as

Denis Wood and John Fels argue, is rooted in the Western post-Renaissance project of rationalising the natural world, by offering a purportedly correct, logical, and objective representation that offers knowledge and control. The construction of nature is thus exemplified through the active and tangible process of cartography, demonstrating how the human can only relate to nature through a socially constructed framework. The chapter will further demonstrate how Tolkien troubles the hierarchy that the human/nature binary has engendered through an environment that frequently attempts to resist the control of the human, seeking to decenter the anthropocentric perspective that has informed the ways in which the environment is understood. This chapter will thus align Tolkien with the deep ecology that succeeded him, exploring the ways in which he engaged in a biocentric approach that, as Clark argues, would "affirm the intrinsic value of all natural life" (*Literature and the Environment* 2).

Section III: Mapping human/nature relationships in Middle-earth

The very act of mapping Middle-earth speaks to an attempt to understand, categorise, and dominate the natural world, and establishes a similarly socially constructed binary between the human and the natural to that of the primary world. Much as in the primary world, maps are used as a way of familiarising, negotiating, and mastering unknown landscapes. Stefan Ekman comments that the map of the Shire in *The Hobbit* (fig. 2) is "not a map of the unknown, it

is very much the known, the labelled, the familiar. It is a landscape tamed…" (*Here Be Dragons* 47). Ekman's argument suggests that the very ability of the fictional cartographer to recognise and piece together the various topographical details, hidden dangers, and secrets of the landscape implies an element of comprehension, and therefore of mastery. The map makes the landscape readable through the medium of cartography; the nature of the map as a textual object, meanwhile, which is passed around and read by various people, means that it is not only the original cartographer who possesses this understanding – rather, every user of the map can come to "read" the landscape, using the map as a tool. This transfer of knowledge to permit mastery over the landscape conveys a Foucauldian power to the map reader, and positions the natural world as something that can be rationalised and condensed onto a page, thereby subjugating it within a power hierarchy that negates its value. The ability of the map to illuminate the landscape suggests that the landscape is something other, something that needs to be analysed and brought under control in order to service the map reader's needs.

This is encapsulated in the episode when Thorin is first offered Thror's Map (fig. 1) by Gandalf. Gandalf explains that "with the map went a key" (Tolkien, *Hobbit* 28); his framing of the two items as a single unit draws parallels between their functions and foreshadows the map's ability to "unlock" the mysteries of the natural world depicted on the map. At first, however, Thorin dismisses his need for the map, claiming to know where Mirkwood is, and the

mountain “well enough” (*Hobbit* 26). Thorin’s scepticism is, perhaps, understandable: at first glance, Thror’s Map does not seem to give any particular topographical detail or indicate any paths which will aid the party in reaching their destination. Yet, as Gandalf points out, the map offers a new level of insight: the runes on the left hand side point to the location of a secret entrance which will allow the dwarves access. Indeed, this is largely how Thror’s Map is used: rather than the presentation of accurate, scaled landscapes and roads, the value of the map lies instead in its instructive writing. The moon letters which Elrond discovers, “[s]tand by the grey stone when the thrush knocks…and the setting sun with the last light of Durin’s Day will shine upon the keyhole” (*Hobbit* 68), demonstrate this, by offering a way into the mountain which no mere topographical replica could. The reliance on the map to navigate and penetrate the mountain presents the landscape as a difficult and disconnected entity from the dwarves, which needs to mapped, read, and decoded in order to be overcome. This is particularly reinforced by Thorin’s dependence on the runes to negotiate the Lonely Mountain’s now threatening façade: despite the fact that he called the Mountain his home for a long time, its environment nevertheless remains separate from him.

The ability of the map to strengthen the diagetic reader’s understanding of his initially impenetrable surroundings is best seen through the character of Bilbo. Keith O’Sullivan argues that “Bilbo’s physical journey is a metaphor for the internal processes of identity construction; his adventures, symbolically

detailed rites of passage; and his quest, a search for maturity and wholeness" (18). Bilbo's growing sense of self is reflected in his growing confidence reading Thror's Map, and confidence and competence it gives him to read and negotiate his surroundings. Of all the characters, it is Bilbo who engages most with Thror's Map, and who has the most success with it, so that it is he who eventually discovers the secret door, after "often borrow[ing] Thorin's map and gaz[ing] at it, pondering over the runes and the message of the moon-letters Elrond had read…" (*Hobbit* 261). It is striking that it is the hobbit rather than any of the dwarves who penetrates the dwarvish secrets of the Lonely Mountain: it emphasises Bilbo's development throughout the text, and highlights how his reading and rereading of the map have worked to give him skills which none of the other characters possess. It further suggests that without an external aid, the natural world remains devoid of meaning and unnegotiable: in neglecting the map, the dwarves are unable to rationalise the environment. Bilbo meanwhile must read and reread Thror's Map, "gaz[ing]" at and "pondering" it repeatedly until his knowledge of the world transforms into power and mastery over the Mountain.

The characterisation of maps as a tool for mastering an unknown landscape is built upon in *The Lord of the Rings*. Immediately after the Council of Elrond, before the travellers are to set out on their quest, Aragorn and Gandalf – sometimes joined by Frodo – frequently meet together to "ponder[…] the storied and figured maps and books of lore that were in the house of Elrond…"

(*Fellowship* 360). It is striking that it is these two characters who consult maps in order to increase their knowledge of Middle-earth, as they are arguably the wisest and most experienced members of the Fellowship. Indeed, in his comments on Tolkien's cartographic practices, Tom Shippey argues that Tolkien's characters "have a strong tendency to talk like maps…" (*The Road to Middle-Earth* 100), citing Aragorn and Gandalf as examples of characters that cogitatively and verbally trace and map the land of Middle-earth, and who thus already possess an innate knowledge of it. That these two characters continue to consult maps in preparation for their quest demonstrates that it is not only the hapless and inexperienced characters like Bilbo who are in need of them. It reinforces the characterisation of the natural world as innately othered by demonstrating that maps are needed by everyone – not only the uninitiated – to expand boundaries of knowledge and control over the natural world.

The connection between the knowledge that maps communicate and the knowledge of and power over the natural environment itself that this provides is depicted in the parallels between the characters reading maps and "reading" their natural environment. By deconstructing and reconstructing nature into a socially legible framework, rendering it understandable and subdued, the map enables its readers to enact this same power over nature in the natural world itself. Although the two do not necessarily coincide in a particular episode in the texts, Tolkien draws a correlation between a character's capacity to read

and interpret a map, and his ability to comprehend, negotiate, and thereby master the landscape itself. This is again epitomised through Bilbo. Early on in the journey, Bilbo is unable to accurately analyse the landscape: he asks, after barely any time has passed from the start of the adventure, whether a mountain range is "*The* Mountain" (Tolkien, *Hobbit* 59), demonstrating both his naivety regarding the enormity of the quest, and his inability to grasp the layout and scale of the country he is traversing. Bilbo also constantly yearns for his home throughout the novel: when climbing the Misty Mountains, Bilbo turns in the direction of his home and reminisces about where things are "safe and comfortable" (*Hobbit* 70), and Tolkien frequently adds the aside, "It was not the last time that he wished that!", when Bilbo thinks about being back at Bag End (*Hobbit* 42, etc.), thereby highlighting the foreignness and otherness of the environment he is currently in. Bilbo's discomfort – both physically and emotionally – in this unknown, wild landscape creates a dichotomy between himself and the environment he travels through, emphasising both his sense of displacement and his inability to control or regulate his surroundings, as he was accustomed to in his home.

Bilbo's eventual mastering of his surroundings is, therefore, all the more marked because of these previous characterisations and correlates with his increasing occupation with the map. Bilbo's confidence traversing the landscape grows throughout the text, and it is in the Mirkwood chapter that he entirely grasps the workings of his surroundings. That he achieves a level of

sensory and cognitive control over the environment is all the more notable given its sylvan nature. Mirkwood Forest is emblematic of what Harrison characterises as the "hostile opposition between forest and civilisation" (49): it is a distinctly pre-Enlightenment forest, standing in contrast to the various homely, ordered habitations and domesticated, pastoral landscapes in Middle-earth, and instead offering an environment which is "*foris*", or outside the boundaries of civilisation. Harrison points to the destabilisation of time and space that occurs in pre-Enlightenment forests, arguing that their ability to "render our deepest structural categories superfluous or unreal" is indicative of their place outside human rationality (38). Mirkwood similarly undermines these categories: as they delve deeper into the forest, their surroundings become increasingly gloomy until "the light at the gate was like a little bright hole far behind…" (*Hobbit* 178), suggesting that they have left their ability to calculate and mark time, and thus the very notion of temporal structures and boundaries behind them. This emphasis on the lack of light in Mirkwood continues: the forest becomes a "dimness" (*Hobbit* 178), and "everlastingly still and dark and stuffy" (*Hobbit* 180) to the extent that the company loses sense of time and place.

Given this subversion of human rational structures and the division this creates between the company and the forest, it is particularly striking that Bilbo manages to successfully navigate and vanquish the obstacles that his environment presents. In Mirkwood he fares better than the dwarves, because

his “sharp inquisitive eyes” (*Hobbit* 179) allow him to see through the gloom, and further on, when the dwarves have been taken by the spiders, Bilbo manages to find them again by approximating where the cries come from. In a forest which has hitherto been impenetrable and uncooperative, Bilbo’s ability to “guess” where his friends have been taken seems to be more than the “luck” (*Hobbit* 200) to which Tolkien attributes it. Rather, it suggests a developing understanding of the environment he is in. As discussed above, this increase in knowledge certainly shifts the relationship between human and nature, but nevertheless upholds the dichotomy by maintaining nature’s alterity. The forest still remains opposed to Bilbo and the Company, and filled with danger, but Bilbo’s gain in knowledge and experience makes him more capable of negotiating it. In this case, Bilbo lies on the more moderate end of the spectrum: his interest is not in significantly changing or harming the environment, but rather about gaining knowledge and therefore control of his surroundings.

This episode becomes particularly striking when considered in comparison with earlier drafts of *The Hobbit*. According to John D. Rateliff, the Mirkwood chapter was the only section of the original manuscript to undergo “substantial re-writing” before publication (*The History of the Hobbit* 335). One of the greatest changes to be made was the way in which Bilbo navigates the unknown forest. In the original draft, Bilbo – in what Rateliff describes as a take on the Theseus myth of classical literature – uses a ball of spider-thread tied

to a tree to trace his steps in the forest and prevent from getting lost. In effect, through the use of the spider-web, Bilbo simultaneously maps out his path in Mirkwood and reads the map he has created to guide his way and find his friends. In the final copy of *The Hobbit*, however, Bilbo does not have access to and thus does not rely on external tools or methods to help him negotiate the unknown forest. Instead, Bilbo must read the physical landscape itself to make his way through. Although the final version shifts the emphasis onto a more intuitive grasp of the landscape, both drafts show how Tolkien was continually preoccupied with exploring different ways of interpreting and mastering the environment. Much as Bilbo learns to read the representation of the landscape in Thror's Map, so too does he learn to read, process and draw conclusions from Mirkwood, thereby demonstrating his exhaustive power over nature.

The parallels between reading maps and the landscape are also made explicit in *The Lord of the Rings*, in particular through Aragorn's character. As previously discussed, Aragorn is no stranger to maps despite his in-depth knowledge of Middle-earth. However, his reading of maps forms only one aspect of his overall "land-reading": Aragorn masters difficult landscapes both through map reading and through his innate knowledge over the land. In his study of the relationship between Hebrideans and their native land, Robert MacFarlane reveals how most islanders did not use paper maps until well into the twentieth century, relying instead on "memory maps" created by a memory

of the land and knowledge of place names, that gave the Hebrideans what MacFarlane terms "a literacy of the land" (20–23). Although Aragorn still partially relies on maps for negotiating a landscape that is consistently othered and mystified, as with Bilbo, this cartographic knowledge translates into an overall ability to quite literally "read" the land like a map. Gandalf comments that "[i]f you bring a Ranger with you, it is well to pay attention to him, especially if the Ranger is Aragorn" (*Fellowship* 370), while Gimli emphasises later on that the weather will not impede Aragorn's ability to track: "That would not baffle a Ranger…A bent blade is enough for Aragorn to read" (*Towers* 636). This language of "reading" the land occurs multiple other times in relation to Aragorn: when seeking Frodo at the beginning of *The Two Towers*, Aragorn struggles to "read" Frodo's footprints and has to look closely at the ground several times before he finds the tracks in "the wet earth" (*Towers* 537). Further on, when searching for Pippin and Merry, Aragorn again "read[s] the marks" in the ground, identifying a broken mallorn-leaf of Lórien and deep hoof-prints (*Towers* 637–38).[27] Although these are manmade signs to an extent, in that

[27] Aragorn's reading of the land can also be seen as fitting into the trope of the Native American tracking the land, as famously embodied in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). In this case, the character's ability to read the land demonstrates a harmony with nature that enables them to accurately understand it. Aragorn's tracking can certainly be read in line with this – particularly as his relationship to nature throughout the text is portrayed as positive and sensitive. However, as discussed previously, the intention here is not to frame every interaction with the land in Tolkien's legendarium as deliberately malicious or harmful, but rather to draw attention to the ways in which these interactions are predicated on an innately hierarchical relationship, that mediates the land through anthropocentric needs and use, embodying Tolkien's comments in his letter to Mitchison about each side seeking a "measure of control". Moreover, Aragorn's moments of land reading do not necessarily suggest a complete harmony with the natural world: Gimli's comments about the weather and Aragorn's struggle to immediately find Frodo's footprints suggest that while his reading of the land is very skilled, it is nevertheless a practice that involves overcoming intrinsic difficulties and resistance that the natural world puts up.

they show human interference in the environment rather than untouched nature, they are nevertheless signs which are embedded in the natural landscape and are inextricable from it: the tracks are seen in the mud and earth, and bent and trampled leaves and grass hint at previous passers-by.

The way in which this natural landscape is described using explicitly textual imagery and language highlights its readability and points to the doubled reading of map and landscape that Aragorn undertakes throughout the text. Notably, although earlier drafts of the orc hunt as published in *The Treason of Isengard* depict Aragorn studying the ground and tracking footprints, there is no mention of "reading" the landscape. As this section of the narrative developed, then, Tolkien made explicit the textual character of the landscape through the extended metaphor of Aragorn reading the land, thereby drawing marked parallels between it and map reading. In Middle-earth, reading maps and reading the landscape form two sides of the same coin: characters need to be either cartographically or environmentally literate (or both), in order to make their way successfully through the world. The characterisation of the natural world as a textual object continues to other it, by depicting it as a foreign entity whose language needs to be learned and decoded until it can be understood.[28] At the same time, the imagery of text and legibility reifies the

[28] The textualisation of the natural world resounds with SueEllen Campbell's interrogation of how to bridge the gap between post-structural theory and ecology. Campbell argues:

> While both theory and ecology reject the traditional humanist view of our importance in the scheme of things, though, what they focus on as a replacement is quite different. Theory sees everything as textuality, as networks of signifying systems of all kinds.

natural world into a rationalised human framework so that, as Plumwood argues, nature only becomes significant and signifying through the supremacy of human reason. In "reading" and interpreting the landscape, Aragorn claims knowledge over this othered entity and utilises it according to his needs. Similarly to Bilbo in Mirkwood, Aragorn's attempts to gain knowledge of the natural world do not revolve around actively harmful interventions over the environment, but rather reveal a relationship that attempts to navigate the boundary between unknown and known in order to gain "a measure of control".

In order to emphasise human dependence of "land reading", whether through the medium of maps or the physical environment, Tolkien demonstrates how certain characters' failure to pay attention to maps or the landscape can lead to confusion and even trouble. After leaving Rivendell, the Fellowship travels through bad weather and difficult terrain before arriving at the borders of Hollin, where they see the beginnings of the Misty Mountains. Pippin assumes that they had turned eastwards rather than continuing southwards, as they are now facing the mountains, but Gandalf explains that what he sees is the mountains in the distance turning southwest, asking, "there are many maps in Elrond's house, but I suppose you never thought to look at them?" (*Fellowship* 368).

> Foucault sees an idea like madness as a text; Lacan sees a human being as a text; Derrida argues that everything is text in the sense that everything signifies something else. But ecology insists that we pay attention not to the way things have meaning for us, but to the way the rest of the world - the non-human part - exists apart from us and our languages… (208–09)

Although Aragorn's reading of the land is, of course, not a foray into post-structuralist theory, Campbell's argument that it is vital to see land and nature not as a text or a site of human meaning but in their own right has relevance here.

Without the knowledge that maps can give, and without the skills to read the land itself, the landscape of Middle-earth remains unfamiliar and disorientating. Although Pippin claims he did look at the maps, and merely cannot remember them accurately, his failure to study the maps intently – which contrasts with Bilbo's constant reading and rereading of Thror's Map – contributes to his continued discomfort and lack of control while on the quest.

Pippin's poor geographical knowledge and its consequences are highlighted again in a later episode in *The Two Towers*, where Pippin and Merry find themselves lost among the trees. Fangorn too accords with the ancient and medieval characterisation of the forest as uncivilised and other. Both the narrator and Pippin stress the unreadable nature of the forest; it is termed "tangled" and "untidy", with undergrowth "trailing" and "half covered with ragged leaves" (*Towers* 600–01). The language used indicates not only the innate confusion of the forest, but also Pippin's inability to make sense of it at all: his unperceptive comments about ragged leaves contrast with Aragorn's immediate ability to find significance in a broken mallorn-leaf. It is little surprise, then, that Pippin and Merry cannot work out how to negotiate Fangorn, and must guess at a direction to take. Even when they try to follow the sunlight, Merry confidently exclaims, "[i]t isn't far…!", only for the narrator to immediately add, "it was further than they thought…", emphasising their inability to gauge distance as well as direction (*Towers* 601). Unlike Bilbo in *The Hobbit*, who is lost in Mirkwood but able to read it instinctively, even if he is supposedly merely

"guessing", Pippin and Merry can make little sense of their surroundings either cartographically or topographically. Their predicament speaks to the innate opposition between human and nature, and illustrates the consequences when the former does not attempt to learn, control, or master the latter. While maps typically provide a means for even inexperienced readers to position themselves on the hierarchy between human and nature, Merry and Pippin's lack of attention to maps undermines any attempt to be in control of nature, while simultaneously reinforcing the dichotomy between them and their environment.

Section IV: Environmental damage

As the Fangorn episode suggests, the ability to read maps and landscape is rendered all the more necessary by the way the environment is constructed as othered and dangerous. Yet throughout the legendarium, it becomes increasingly clear that the true danger lies in humans and their perpetuation and enactment of the hierarchical power dynamic that defines the relationship between the human and nature. As discussed in section II, this attempt to maintain control lies on a spectrum, from those who contribute to the cultural construction of nature as "other" to those who intentionally damage the environment. Dickerson and Evans argue that Tolkien's sub-created nature is cast as one of the main victims in the legendarium, with "much of the violence in Middle-earth…done either directly or indirectly to the earth itself" (34).

Although many of the episodes discussed in the previous section are not directly harmful to the environment in themselves, they reveal a pattern of othering and control that, to the extreme of the spectrum, is embodied in acts of environmental violence and neglect.

Notably, although not every act against the environment is an act of aggression, Tolkien makes it clear that everyone – represented by their various cultures – is capable of being complicit in Middle-earth's environmental degradation. Susan Jeffers creates a tripartite model for environmental relationships in Middle-earth, arguing that there are three types of relationship between human and nature in the legendarium: Elves, hobbits and Ents have a power dynamic that Jeffers terms "power with" nature, which "recognises and appreciates the Otherness of the world without objectifying that world" (16); Dwarves and Men (represented by the Rohirrim and the people of Gondor) have a dialectic relationship with nature termed "power from", in which they relate to their environment through its benefit to themselves, yet maintain an overall positive and nurturing relationship with it (17); Sauron, Saruman, and the Orcs have "power over" their environment, predicating their relationship on "domination and perversion" (75). Although Jeffers' model accurately unpacks many of the power dynamics in Tolkien's writing, it nevertheless neglects some of the contradictions and exceptions that characterise a particular culture's relationship with the natural world, which are essential to understanding

Tolkien's broader argument: that anyone[29] is capable of dominating, exploiting, and injuring the natural world out of greed and neglect, and that everyone is responsible for reformulating their position of power over it and instead substituting an ethics of respect and care.

There are numerous examples of environmental destruction in Middle-earth, among the most notable being the felling of trees enacted by Sauron and Saruman in *The Lord of the Rings*, which has been extensively discussed by Dickerson and Evans, Flieger, and Jeffers. Strikingly, however, Tolkien demonstrates the vulnerability of the natural world to acts of explicit violence much earlier both in terms of Middle-earth's history and his own textual chronology, through the Two Trees of Valinor. Originally two lamps set by the Valar to give light to the newly created Arda, the Trees of Valinor are created from the light of the lamps after they are destroyed by Morgoth. In *The Book of Lost Tales*, Palúrien (the early name for the Vala Yavanna) weaves spells of "life and growth and putting forth of leaf, blossoming and yielding of fruit…" (Tolkien, *Lost Tales I* 71), putting all of her energies into the nurturing and care of the trees. This is emphasised in a later draft of the "Quenta Silmarillion", which describes how Yavanna "hallowed the mould [where the trees are growing] with mighty song, and Niënna watered it with tears…" (*Shaping* 81). Here, Yavanna creates a sacrosanct space around the trees, while Niënna tends to them with her very body, creating an interdependent relationship

[29] With perhaps the exception of the Ents – see the following section.

based on care and respect. Dickerson and Evans further comment on the decentred power dynamic between the Valar and the trees, drawing attention to the language of "awakening" in *The Silmarillion*: "under her song the saplings grew and became fair and tall, and came to flower; and thus there awoke in the world the Two Trees of Valinor…" (Tolkien, *Silmarillion* 31), implying "that they had a life already, prior to Yavanna's song of creation, which her singing simply arouses from dormancy…" (Dickerson and Evans 8).

This image of nurture and vitality is set up only to be undermined by the violence done to the trees by Morgoth – the first explicit act of environmental destruction in the legendarium. Morgoth enlists the help of Ungoliant – a primeval spirit born of the darkness who takes on the form of a giant spider – to destroy the Two Trees. While the original version in *The Book of Lost Tales* focuses on the loss of light, highlighting the "fiery radiance" that Ungoliant drains from the tree (*Lost Tales I* 153), subsequent versions dwell on the biomaterial damage. Both the 1930 "Quenta" in *The Shaping of Middle-earth* and the "Quenta Silmarillion" from 1937 in *The Lost Road* (1987) focus on the trees not as bearers of light but as natural matter, highlighting the violence done by Morgoth and Ungoliant from this perspective: "With his black sword Morgoth stabbed each tree to its very core, and as their juices spouted forth Ungoliant sucked them up, and poison from her foul lips went into their tissues and withered them, leaf and branch and root…" (*Shaping* 92). Here, the trees are depicted as natural, fragile bodies rather than mere vessels of light,

permeable to poison and ecologically vulnerable to the wanton damage caused by Morgoth and Ungoliant in particular, who views the trees as an exploitable source of nourishment and satisfaction. Unlike the original version, the arboreal nature of the Trees is stressed: they wither, "leaf and branch and root", not only rooting this episode within specific physical components and thus an individual natural body but also emphasising the idea of total environmental degradation through the accumulative listing. The tragedy thus becomes twofold: it is both these specific Trees' passing and the broader environmental damage that they speak to that Tolkien addresses with their death. It is moreover notable that this episode is part of Morgoth's theft of the Silmarils and the subsequent First Kinslaying: although Morgoth had certainly introduced evil and conflict into Arda before this, the killing of the Two Trees and the theft of the Silmarils are the events that entirely break the paradise of Valinor. Not only is the destruction of the trees flanked by two other morally reprehensible acts then, but this act of power and dominance over nature becomes central to the narratives of violence that follow.

The destruction of the Two Trees of Valinor is echoed and amplified in the widespread forestry of the Númenóreans, as depicted in *Unfinished Tales*. Jeffers' model of Men having a "power from" relationship with nature is disrupted by the inclusion of the Númenóreans. Although Jeffers argues that Men in Middle-earth, as represented by Gondorians and the Rohirrim, have a dialectically hierarchical relationship with nature based on use and benefit, she

also maintains that these relationships are still "overall positive" (17). By including the Númenóreans within this framework – whose relationship with the natural world is indeed predicated on use-value but who manifest this need on an unprecedented and devastating scale – this "power from" model is complicated, and the environmentally catastrophic effects of Men are brought to the fore.

That the Númenóreans have an anthropocentrised and utilitarian approach to the natural world is made explicit in "Aldarion and Erendis: The Mariner's Wife", the longest and most intimate depiction of Númenórean life in Tolkien's legendarium. The tale revolves around the tension between Aldarion, who is drawn to seafaring and voyages Odysseus-like for years at a time to the far-off shores of Middle-earth, and his wife Erendis, who is profoundly attached to the island of Númenor and resents Aldarion's draw to the sea. Although the story is at its heart about the breakdown of a marriage, Aldarion and Erendis' conflict manifests through their opposing attitudes to the natural world: while Erendis loves nature and in particular forests "in themselves" (Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales* 191), Aldarion's relationship with nature depends on the benefits it can provide him. Aldarion's focus on use-value is demonstrated early on: his introduction to the story emphasises that "[f]rom the first he loved the Sea, and his mind was turned to the craft of shipbuilding…" (*Unfinished Tales* 174), so that Aldarion's affective response to nature is from the beginning mediated through a pragmatic act that centers the human (that is,

himself) within nature. This attitude compounds as Aldarion turns seriously to seafaring and desires more and more timber for his ships. His father Meneldur opposes his son's endeavours and forbids him from felling any more trees in Númenor, so Aldarion's sights turn to the shores of Middle-earth, where he "look[s] with wonder at the great forests" (*Unfinished Tales* 176) and establishes a haven to collect timber and build his ships. Aldarion's gaze of wonder suggests a sublime experience brought about by the magnificence of the forests, yet in actuality, his emotional response is due to the timber that the forests can provide; Tolkien subverts the language of the sublime to demonstrate the centrality of nature as tool rather than nature as independent being to Aldarion.

At first, however, Aldarion's deforestation seems to be rooted in a relatively moderate and careful practice. There is an emphasis on replanting, both in Númenor and in Middle-earth, so that at times Aldarion is seen "felling no trees but setting himself to their planting only" (*Unfinished Tales* 182), giving "most heed to the future, planting always where there was felling…new woods set to grow where there was room…" (*Unfinished Tales* 190). Although on the surface this practice of conservation seems to neutralise the damage wrought by the deforestation, it nevertheless continues to trouble Erendis, who suspects that Aldarion still has "little love for the trees in themselves, caring for them as timber that would serve his designs" (*Unfinished Tales* 191). Erendis' displeasure is central to Tolkien's environmental critique: it highlights how the

very culture of viewing nature only through its use-value is harmful. Speaking ahead to the deep ecological approach outlined previously in this chapter, Tolkien outlines how this hierarchical attitude to nature will lead to its inevitable domination and destruction, despite all attempts to the contrary. Aldarion endeavours to replant the trees he fells, yet interlaced with these episodes are others that reinforce his continued power over nature: Aldarion is proclaimed "Master of the Forests" (*Unfinished Tales* 181), and although he advocates replanting, there are nevertheless numerous episodes where "little had been planted to replace what was taken" (*Unfinished Tales* 181), and both Aldarion and the narrative become refocused on the felling of trees that are "hewn and sawn" for the Númenóreans use (*Unfinished Tales* 185), demonstrating how Aldarion's utilitarian approach to nature eventually wins out. Erendis bitterly comments on the Men in Númenór, that "[a]ll things were made for their service: hills are for quarries, river to furnish water or to turn wheels, trees for board, women for their body's need, or if fair to adorn their table and hearth…anger they show only when they become aware, suddenly, that there are other wills in the world beside their own" (*Unfinished Tales* 207). Erendis' words frame the deforestation not as a use of natural resources but rather as an exploitation of vulnerable bodies that fits into a broader narrative of domination and power.[30]

[30] There is a very evident ecofeminist reading present in Erendis' comparison between Men's exploitation of the natural world and men's exploitation of women's bodies. This is made even more explicit further on, where Erendis warns her daughter Ancalimë about men's selfish ways, pressing her to resist their wills: "sink your roots into the rock, and face the wind, though it blow away all your leaves" (*Unfinished Tales* 207). True to her nature, Erendis uses tree imagery to urge her daughter to strength, thereby reinforcing the connection between the

Power and control are thus depicted here as corruptive, thereby assigning the Númenórean deforestation the same thematic significance as the narratives of the Silmarils and the One Ring. Although Aldarion attempts to practice his mastery over nature responsibly, environmental destruction inevitably reigns. Appendix D to *Unfinished Tales* centres on the port of Lond Daer, the shipbuilding haven founded by Aldarion in Middle-earth. The narrative voice switches from the tragic high romance of "Aldarion and Erendis: The Mariner's Wife" to a more factual but nevertheless condemnatory tone. Although at the time of the events of *The Lord of the Rings* the area around the port is still "well-wooded", the narrative emphatically states that its ecology used to be "quite different", with "vast and continuous forests" occupying the land (*Unfinished Tales* 262). The narrative directly attributes this change to the Númenórean voyages and indeed specifically to Aldarion, explaining that these changes were "largely due to" his presence in the area (*Unfinished Tales* 262).

Here, it becomes clear that Aldarion's gestures towards conservation were insincere and futile: he once again gazes upon the forests with "wonder" and a "hunger for timber" that will make Númenor into a great naval force, demonstrating his willingness to exploit nature in order to satiate his desire for

female and the natural body. Although a more in-depth consideration of ecofeminism is beyond the bounds of this thesis, see Janet Brennan Croft and Leslie A. Donovan's edited collection *Perilous and Fair: Women in the Works and Life of J. R. R. Tolkien* for further discussion of potential feminist readings in Tolkien's legendarium.

power (*Unfinished Tales* 262). Swiftly, the felling of the trees becomes "ruthless", and there is no longer any thought given to "husbandry or replanting" (*Unfinished Tales* 262).[31] Tolkien exposes the cracks in Aldarion's brand of conservative environmentalism: fundamentally, as Erendis fears, Aldarion does not respect or care for nature in its own right, which leads him to abandon responsible practices as soon as they inconvenience him. That Aldarion participates in and perpetuates a destructive cultural attitude is made clear in the way the forestry "continue[s] to be extended after his days" (*Unfinished Tales* 262). As with the Two Trees of Valinor, the tragedy of Aldarion's actions lies both in the violence done to the individual trees and in the broader, large-scale environmental loss. The effects – both of the physical damage done to the environment and the attitude towards nature that led to it – are undeniable. The narrative frankly states that "[t]he devastation wrought by the Númenóreans was incalculable", and the tree-felling is described as "devastating" (*Unfinished Tales* 263). This incalculable impact reverberates throughout the rest of the legendarium: during the Council of Elrond, Elrond recalls a time "when a squirrel could go from tree to tree from what is now the Shire to Dunland west of Isengard" (*Fellowship* 345), an area encompassing the lands around Lond Daer. This imagery of dense forestlands contrasts heavily with the Third Age reality, where the area – although described as well-

[31] Specifically, the felling of the trees is described as "ruthless" when the native inhabitants of the region realise the deforestation is becoming devastating and begin to resist the Númenóreans' destruction of their habitat. In response, the Númenóreans become more violent, both to the forest and to its inhabitants, and abandon their attempts to replant what they cut down. There is here a very clear link between colonial violence and environmental violence, which will be considered in much greater detail in chapter four.

wooded “in places” (*Unfinished Tales* 262) – is no longer considered sufficiently forested to warrant any depiction of trees on the Middle-earth map, thereby emphasising the permanent and irreversible loss wrought by the Númenóreans.

The Númenóreans’ deforestation of the area around Lond Daer is emblematic of a broader desire to be in control of the natural world, a quest for power which cartography frequently contributes to. Although in the case of Lond Daer there is no specific reference to mapping, the description of the Númenóreans’ activities suggests an almost cognitive mapping that takes place. The Númenóreans interaction with the land revolves largely around two practices: naming places, and forming and redrawing the land – as seen with their forestry – acts that are reminiscent of what mapping does on paper. When the Númenóreans first arrive on the shores of Lond Daer they divide the land into two regions split by the river Gwathló, and name one Minhiriath and the other Enedwaith, names that survive and appear on the Middle-earth map from the Third Age. They then begin not only to fell the trees, but to drive “great tracks and roads into the forests northwards and southwards from the Gwathló” (*Unfinished Tales* 262), thus fundamentally changing the shape of the landscape, and quite literally drawing in roads and borders within the country. The Númenóreans’ actions not only affect what appears on future maps, but they function as a form mapping in themselves, thereby exerting the power that cartography typically provides. Their deforestation of both Númenor and

Lond Daer is thus intrinsically bound in a wider narrative of power and domination, that finds expression in numerous acts.

Section V: Resisting human domestication/domination

The desire to dominate nature, regardless of the harm done to it, thus forms a key aspect of numerous human/nature dynamics in Tolkien's legendarium. There are times, however, when nature fights back against this oppression. Erendis' comment that Men (and men) show anger "when they become aware, suddenly, that there are other wills in the world beside their own" (*Unfinished Tales* 207) speaks to the other wills in Middle-earth's natural world that find a voice and resist the control and harm forced upon them by the human world. This resistance is largely located in the wilderness, in the parts of Middle-earth that have managed to challenge the presence of the human. The contrast between domesticated and wild nature is notable. The Shire, for example, embodies domesticated nature. As both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are hobbit-centric narratives, the Shire is thus automatically given a sense of familiarity and safety; with perhaps the exception of Rivendell, nowhere else in Middle-earth is given this entirely secure quality. Of course, as the novel unfolds, it becomes clear that even the Shire is not immune to the dangers of the external world: strange creatures try to get past the Bounders and cross the borders, Aragorn reveals that it was partly thanks to him and other Rangers that evil forces were kept at bay, and by the end the Shire has been invaded

by Saruman. Yet it is notable that these threats all come from external forces; the land of the Shire is never characterised as frightening, dangerous, or unknown. The stability of the Shire is thus largely due to its benevolent landscape, made unthreatening through taming: it is entirely composed of farmland or settlements, both of which imply an element of human domestication of and control over the landscape.

This sense of security is then reflected in the Shire's presence on maps. Although on small-scale maps, such as the Middle-earth map (fig. 9), there is not a noticeable difference between it and other areas, large-scale maps such as the "A Part of the Shire" highlight its safe quality. The high level of detail and the absence of any warnings on the map give the impression that every part of the Shire is known, safe, and can be charted. The domestication and agriculturalisation of the Shire is a manifestation of a form of subjugation of the natural world, a world that does not resist human control. Although the relationship between the hobbits and their home is framed as largely positive, and – as Jeffers notes – they tend for the land carefully with a mind towards preserving and cherishing its natural environment and ecology, within the framework of the human/nature binary put forward by Plumwood, Garrard, Heise, and Clark, this still advances an entirely anthropocentric way of relating to nature. The safety of the Shire correlates to the way in which the Shire is subsumed within a human construction of nature, that removes from the landscape anything that is unknown or threatening to its inhabitants.

Yet beyond the boundaries of the domesticated Shire, there are other wills at work. Although Middle-earth is filled with large tracts of tamed and settled land, it still contains areas of wilderness that resist the domination of the human, whether that be the domestication of nature such as in the Shire, or the active destruction of ecospheres, such as the Númenóreans practised. The division between the human and the wild is essential in defining the wildnerness: Garrard delineates it as that which is entirely external to human culture, arguing that wilderness is a relatively recent concept in human history, as it requires the counterpoint of a domestic, agricultural landscape in relation to its own, untamed nature; in the prehistoric past, all nature would be considered "wild" (Garrard 59). Notably, therefore, wilderness still relies on the human/nature binary: its identity is constructed in relation to the human, positioned on the very opposite pole to human civilisation. Tolkien unpacks the effects of this binary, demonstrating how it continues to frame the wild, nonhuman nature as something fundamentally opposed and indeed dangerous to the human – Tolkien's wilderness consisting of environments that are the most untouched, undomesticated, and unknown by the human. At the same time, Tolkien responds to the construction of this dichotomy by imbuing his wilderness with agency, enabling it to resist different manifestations of human control and thus positioning wild nature with a subjectivity that lies entirely external to human frameworks, that allows it to oppose human will.

Tolkien's depiction of the wild relies on the juxtaposition between domesticated and untamed nature that Garrard points to: the characters' experience of the wilderness in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* feels all the more dangerous when contrasted with the familiar safety they have left behind in the Shire. Many of the texts' most dangerous episodes – to the human protagonists – take place in wild spaces untouched by humans: the trolls are encountered in the woods, Bilbo and the Dwarves are almost eaten alive in Mirkwood, The Old Forest places the hobbits in physical peril on more than one occasion, and Caradhras is treacherous and unforgiving. Notably, it is the very nature of these areas which is dangerous: in Mirkwood, the river will put travellers to sleep, the trees don't allow light or air in, and the spiders that live within will attack and eat passers-by; in The Old Forest, Old Man Willow – for all intents and purposes a tree – traps the hobbits and threatens to squeeze Merry in two; and in Caradhras, it is the rocks themselves that fall on the paths, endangering the Fellowship.

The relationship between maps and wilderness is striking. While the Shire's safety was represented through the large-scale detail of "A Part of the Shire", the ultimately unknowable quality of the wilderness resists mapping. While the small-scale Middle-earth map again does not differentiate between these areas, the other maps give clues as to their unknowability. As the dwarves remark before they come across the trolls in *The Hobbit*, in certain areas of

Middle-earth, "[t]he old maps are no use: things have changed for the worse and the road is unguarded" (Tolkien, *Hobbit* 44). Again, looking at earlier iterations of this line reveals Tolkien's developing thoughts on the relationship between maps and the environment. In the first edition from 1937, the text originally read: "the map-makers have not reached this country yet…" (Tolkien, *The Annotated Hobbit* 69); this was amended to the finalised version in the 1966 reprint. The rewriting is subtle, and on the surface conveys much the same meaning; yet while the original version merely points to the lack of maps as grounds for the alienness of the wilderness, the second version places emphasis on the inability of maps, even when they do exist, to provide a complete sense of safety and control over wild, unknown areas. It moreover draws attention to the shift in the maps' effectuality; these areas of land used to be known and calculable, but the increasing danger of the land, precipitated by the lack of law and order – revealed in subsequent writing to be due to the failing of Gondor and Arnor as kingdoms of power – allows the wilderness to encroach and frustrates the maps' previous sense of certainty. Other wilderness areas reveal this same resistance: on Thror's Map, Mirkwood is barely featured and therefore untamed: only an arrow points towards the location of the forest, with an ominous note acknowledging the presence of spiders. Its lack of detailed presence on the map emphasises its unknowable and therefore dangerous character. On "A Part of the Shire", meanwhile, The Old Forest is placed on the very margins and spills over the edge of the map.

Its position here recalls medieval modes of mapmaking, where the unknown would be placed on the peripheries of the known world (Woodward 332).

The only map in the legendarium that focuses on wilderness is the map of the Wilderland (fig. 12) in *The Hobbit*, yet despite the map's attempt to organise, categorise, and represent all the dangers in the landscape, it ultimately proves to be useless: it is in this very wilderland, with its focus on the Misty Mountains and Mirkwood, that the company face some of their greatest dangers. The Wilderland map speaks to the dwarves' remark that maps are "no use" in these areas – despite their attempt at control and rationalisation, the autonomy contained in wild nature refuses the power hierarchy and control that mapping and the wider human/nature binary typically attempt to enforce.

Section VI: The agency of the landscape

The landscape's resistance to mapping is exacerbated by the fantastical elements introduced in Tolkien's nature. In Middle-earth, nature is not only wild and untamed, it can also be sentient and alive. This characterisation of nature can be read as a response to the derationalisation of nature that occurs as part of the construction of the human/nature binary. As Plumwood outlined, an important step in creating this binary is not only the association of the rational with the human, but also the subsequent framing of nature as fundamentally mindless (*Mastery of Nature* 107). Tolkien takes advantage of generic

possibilities to imbue his nature with a mind, allowing it to resist the control of the human on multiple levels. Rather than engaging with notions of rationality (indeed, as discussed above, Tolkien's perception of rationality was divorced from this post-Platonic model), Tolkien closely prefigures Plumwood's arguments by instilling his nature with other, mindlike qualities such as intentionality and emotion. The emphasis on emotion is particularly striking, as it has historically been negatively opposed to rationality and reason; thus, rather than giving value to human intellectual hierarchies by using them as a framework for his sub-creation, Tolkien entirely refigures what it means to be "mindful" to enact a new type of natural agency. This is exemplified when the Fellowship attempt to cross Caradhras, and the rocks of the mountain itself fall to prevent their journey. Notably, these dangers are framed throughout the episode as the will of the mountain, rather than mere accident; Caradhras is portrayed as a sentient being with personal grudges, motivations, and the ability to take deliberate actions based on its feelings. Gimli comments that "Caradhras was called the Cruel, and has an ill name" (Tolkien, *Fellowship* 376), giving the mountain a moral and therefore cognizant character. Later on, Gimli warns that "Caradhras has not forgiven us….He has more snow yet to fling at us…" (*Fellowship* 379), and argues that the storm and the rock falls are "the ill will of Caradhras" (*Fellowship* 381), while Boromir adds that "these stones are aimed at us" (*Fellowship* 376), underlining Caradhras' agency.

It could be argued that, as it is only a select few – often Gimli – who make these comments, this personification of Caradhras comes from a place of personal superstition or is a rhetorical device intended to underline the physical power of the mountain by the speaker; yet further on in the narrative, it is the narrator who comments, "with that last stroke the malice of the mountain seemed to be expended, as if Caradhras was satisfied that the invaders had been beaten off…" (*Fellowship* 382). The language used here – forgiven, malice, satisfied – is affective, giving Caradhras the capacity for intentionality and emotion and thereby emphasising the personal agency of its landscape. This autonomy is further emphasised by the physical anthropomorphisation of the mountain; its "head" is described as swathed in grey clouds (*Fellowship* 374); "shrill cries, and wild howls of laughter" emanate from the mountain at the same time as it reacts to the Fellowship and aims rocks at them (*Fellowship* 376); and Gandalf urges the travellers to descend from the mountain's "knees" (*Fellowship* 383). This physical and emotional anthropomorphisation troubles the characterisation of nature as a passive entity and portrays it instead as conscious and active. The use of anthropomorphic language to describe the mountain may, of course, be read as a continuation of the anthropocentrism that marks the human/nature binary and that I argue that Tolkien – in his empowering of nature with agency – rejects. However, although the language used here is anthropomorphic, the concerns and superiority of the human are very much decentred. Anthropomorphic imagery is the only vocabulary available to adequately convey the sentience and agency of the mountain, as

this is traditionally the only framework through which humans have understood the mind; by appropriating this imagery, Tolkien continues to subvert this hierarchy and reframes agency as inherent to the natural world.

The tension between anthropomorphism and depicting natural agency is addressed by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen in his discussion of American environmental writer Aldo Leopold's phrase, "thinking like a mountain" (qtd. in Cohen, *Stone* 3). Cohen initially argues that in this phrase, Leopold employs a "strategic anthropomorphism to deepen human sensitivity to ecological precariousness" (*Stone* 2–3), yet further on, Cohen moves beyond rhetorical devices to consider the ways that such phrases construe not an anthropomorphisation but an acknowledgement of a vitality and agency that both the human and nonhuman embody: "What is if it is not anthropomorphising to speak of a stone's ability to resist, its power to attract – and even of its sympathies, alliances, inclinations, and spurs?" (*Stone* 212). Cohen's reframing of agency and activity builds upon Jane Bennett's theory of "vibrant matter", in which she argues that everything – the human, the environmental, and the inhuman – all possess a "vital materiality" (10): a force that acts upon, among, and with other forces to produce effects in the world. Thus, Bennett shifts away from the common perception of the nonhuman as inert, passive, and object, to a Latourian conceptualisation of things as "actants", that is to say, as mediators of energy and active participants in the world. Speaking to Plumwood's notion of intentionality, Bennett thus entirely

reformulates the notion of agency, so that speaking of nature as active, mindful, and intentional is no longer a mere anthropomorphisation, but a deliberate configuration of agency and vitality as intrinsic to the nonhuman. Notably, Bennett seeks to "shift from the language of epistemology to that of ontology" (3): reminiscent of Tolkien's vitalisation of his natural world, Bennett's approach to agency is not defined by an emphasis on rationality or knowledge, but rather is rooted in a thing's subjectivity, existence, and experience. Through its fantastic ability to dislodge rocks and reject trespassers, Caradhras embodies "vibrant matter", reconfiguring the natural world as an active agent rather than a passive body and moving even beyond the deep ecological framing of nature as an independent entity, to a posthuman redefinition of human and nonhuman categories.

Notably, indeed, despite the human vocabulary used to describe it, Caradhras is still firmly classed as a part of the landscape, rather than transformed into an entirely new creature, thus emphasising how the natural world is being made literally rather than metaphorically "vibrant" and active. This was not always the case in Tolkien's writing; Verlyn Flieger draws attention to the differences between the Caradhras episode in *The Lord of the Rings* and the scene with the stone-giants in *The Hobbit*: "There are the same phenomena: shrill cries, wild howls on the wind, stones and boulders falling all around, hostile environment, plus snow. Yet, without ever saying so, Tolkien creates this storm not as stone giants but as the intentional activity of the mountain

itself…" ('Forests and Trees' 110). Whereas in *The Hobbit*, the danger of the storm was created by magical creatures linked to the landscape but nevertheless clearly separate from it,[32] in *The Lord of the Rings*, Caradhras is specifically referred to as a mountain – a sentient, vindictive mountain, but a mountain nonetheless. This more nuanced approach emphasises how it is the landscape itself that is an active, alive participant in the narrative, thereby reformulating the very concept of agency away from the purely rational and human to a more encompassing definition of intentionality and subjectivity.

This exploration of nonhuman agency is continued through the Ents and Huorns. Although Ents are a race of beings much in the same way as hobbits, orcs, and Elves, they nevertheless straddle the line between landscape and creature: they are more "creature-ish" than Caradhras – featuring as they do on the lists and lore of Living Creatures – but, although they are categorised as completely different beings to trees, their tree-like qualities are nevertheless central to their characterisation, which works to explicitly connect them to the

[32] In *The Hobbit*, the stone giants have much the same effects as Caradhras: they "hurl[…]" and "toss[…]" rocks, and their "guffawing and shouting" can be heard throughout the mountains (*Hobbit* 73). The stone-giants, however, never display any specific animosity to the protagonists; the stones are being thrown for their own private game, rather than aimed at the travellers because of ill will, as in Caradhras. It is interesting to compare Tolkien's stone-giants to those of C.S. Lewis in *The Silver Chair* (1953). In this, Jill initially confuses the giants for enormous boulders: "'I do believe,' thought Jill, 'that all the stories about giants might have come from those funny rocks. If you were coming along here when it was half dark, you could easily think those piles of rock were giants…'" (Lewis 73). Jill realizes that these piles of rock are in fact giants when they begin to move and play a game of rock throwing, much as Tolkien's stone-giants do. In both instances, the giants are materially linked to their physical landscape, yet remain distinct from it. Tolkien's portrayal of Caradhras moves away from this folkloric device, and creates a more potent sense of danger through an actively angry entity that is an intrinsic part of the world.

landscape. Tolkien's depiction of the Ents is the reverse of his depiction of Caradhras; while Caradhras is a part of the landscape which is described using anthropomorphic language, the Ents are humanoid creatures which are discussed using arboreal language: Treebeard is fourteen foot high; "clad in stuff like green and grey bark" which may be his hide; his torso is referred to as his "trunk";[33] and his beard is alternately described as "bushy", "twiggy", and "mossy" (*Towers* 603). This description is emblematic of the Ents' ability to slip easily between the categories of tree and sentient being. Treebeard describes Ents that are growing "tree-ish", standing still in the forest for seasons at a time, with "the deep grass of the meadow round…[their] knees" and "covered with leafy hair" (*Towers* 618). These Ents are thus becoming more engrained within the forest and landscape. On the other hand, there are Ents who are still wide awake, such as Treebeard, and even trees that are becoming more "Ent-ish". The Huorns, for example, are firmly categorised as trees, yet have many of the characteristics of a conscious creature: they have a voice, can move, and are able to make decisions and take definitive action, such as when they join the Battle of the Hornburg. Their method of warfare is also very pertinent: Pippin describes the Ents' behaviour in the Destruction of Isengard, saying "[t]heir fingers, and their toes, just freeze on to rock; and they tear it up like bread-crust. It was like watching the work of great tree roots in a hundred years, all packed into a few moments…" (*Towers* 739). This reinforces the

[33] Trunk, of course, is also an old-fashioned word for torso, but in this context, it also has connotations of tree trunks.

physical connection between the Ents and their surrounding environment; as Jeffers argues, “Ents not only harness the power of the natural, organic world, but they also embody that power…” (27). The Ents and Huorns thus blur the boundaries between landscape and creature by deconstructing the divide from opposite directions; the Ents become more treeish and the Huorns become more sentient. This slippage imbues the landscape with the agency and subjectivity typically only afforded to creatures, thus disrupting the binary between the human and nature and demonstrating how – tree or creature – they embody the agency and activity of vibrant matter.

Not only are the Ents and Huorns sentient and active, but, like Caradhras’s, their actions are based on personal motivations. Although Treebeard claims at first that he is on nobody’s side in the war, and that such affairs do not concern him, by the end of *The Two Towers*, he and the other Ents and Huorns have gone to battle against Saruman’s forces. What motivates Treebeard is the simultaneous destruction of his environment and his people; until he connects the felling of the trees with Saruman’s actions, he considers the evil taking over the world the concern of Men and Elves. Dickerson and Evans suggest that the Ents act because the necessity of protecting nature “transcends all political boundaries, alliances, and ‘sides’” (119). Arguably, however, protecting nature is itself a political stance, taken by the Ents as an act of self-defence. Treebeard – and by extension the other Ents and Huorns whom he recruits – do not act indiscriminately; it is their feelings based on their sense of self and

their personal lived experience in the world that are the catalyst that moves them from an “idle” to a “roused” state, that is to say, as an “actant”. If we consider that the Ents and Huorns form the natural world to a certain extent, their decision to engage with the Destruction of Isengard and the Battle of the Hornburg is nature acting on a moral and personal stance. There are therefore two important factors which contribute to the sentience of the landscape: the ability to form an identity, as seen in the Ents’ and Caradhras’ personal motivations, and the ability to enact decisions based on this identity, whether by marching on enemy forces, or throwing rocks onto unwanted trespassers. The mindlike qualities of nature, and the agency that these afford it, enables resistance against harmful power dynamics established by the human. In this case, rather than being rendered passive and exploitable, the Ents and Huorns – standing in for the trees and forests of Middle-earth – are able to mobilise and resist the environmental damage that is being caused by the waves of industrial activity and warfare that are sweeping throughout the land. Read in the context of the “incalculable” devastation of the forests wrought by the Númenóreans in the previous Age, the Ents’ stand appears all the more political in redressing the historic power balance between human and nature. This environmental protest not only enacts a fantasy of the natural world able to physically fight back against the exploitation and harm caused to it, but it also importantly depicts the natural world as a subject with its own agency, vitality, and intrinsic value, that prefigures the deep ecologist view of the environment.

This fantastical depiction of the landscape moreover implicitly affects Middle-earth's cartography. As difficult as the wilderness and the dangerous areas of the world are to map, it presumably becomes more difficult when what is being mapped is mutable, active, and has its own personal agenda. The Old Forest on the borders of the Shire, filled with Huorn-like trees that "do actually move", has paths which "shift and change from time to time" thanks to these ambulating trees (*Fellowship* 145). There are notably no paths marked out on "A Part of the Shire" through the Old Forest, although other Middle-earth maps do feature roads through forested areas, such as the Old Forest Road marked in Mirkwood in the Map of the Wilderland in *The Hobbit*. The impossibility of mapping these trees can be read as the ultimate act of natural non-compliance: by refusing stillness, the trees push against the borders and paths imposed by maps, thereby resisting the structures that human mapping attempts to impose on the natural world. The personal impetuses of the landscape also complicate the concept of an objective map; if the landscape itself has subjectivity and alters its behaviour depending on who is in it, a single map cannot adequately reflect this for a broad range of readers. Although there is no specific discussion in the texts about the difficulties of mapping such sentient areas, the general discussions about mapping unknown areas of Middle-earth and Tolkien's fantastical characterisation of his landscape as a conscious entity work together to suggest further implicit complications in charting Middle-earth. Through vital environments such as Caradhras and the

Ents, the concept of the “unknown wilderness” which resists mapping is pushed to the extreme, and the project of mapping as a form of codifying and controlling the natural world is obstructed.

Although placed on the peripheries of the physical text, the maps in Tolkien’s legendarium are a key hermeneutic device, both diagetically and as a means of representing and interpreting environmental dynamics within the text. Their very presence within the narrative illustrates and enables the binary opposition between human and nature that pervades Tolkien’s sub-creation, and speaks to the various manifestations of power over nature that occur throughout Middle-earth, from the purely control-based to the flagrantly destructive. Tolkien’s undermining of these maps through his reformulation of natural agency and his fantastic vitalisation of the natural world acts as a form of environmental protest that can be read as deep ecological, by rejecting an anthropocentric view and its concomitant control and reasserting instead the intrinsic value of independent nature. The ways in which the maps fail to accurately represent and control the natural world forms part of a larger narrative on the tension between cartographic representation and changing physical space, on which the following chapter also centres.

Chapter 3: Into the Abyss of Time: Geological and Temporal Mapmaking

But when we crave power over life – endless wealth, unassailable safety, immortality – then desire becomes greed. And if knowledge allies itself to that greed, then comes evil. Then the balance of the world is swayed, and ruin weighs heavy in the scale…

- Ursula Le Guin, *The Farthest Shore* (333–34)

Section I: Introduction

That the history of Middle-earth is predicated on enormous and consequential physical change is immediately obvious from Tolkien's framing of it as a "mythology for England". Tolkien's desire to create a "vast backcloth" of legends and tales for his country, and his insistence that Middle-earth should not be read as an "imaginary world" or another planet, but rather his own set in another, long ago time, immediately directs the reader's attention not only to the formation and existence of his sub-creation, but also to its inevitable destruction (*Letters* 144, 239). As John D. Rateliff puts forward,

> since Middle-earth is destined to become the world we see around us today, every wonder […Tolkien] describes is doomed to pass away […]. In a way, the whole epic of Middle-earth, from the Ainulindalë to the Restored Kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor, is the world's longest line of dominos, set up with infinite care only to be knocked down. ('Mythic Prehistory' 67)

This evolution is not only implicit in Tolkien's set-up of his world, it is explicitly illustrated at various points throughout the history of Middle-earth, a history which is marked by large-scale, often cataclysmic physical shifts.

Tolkien's heavy focus on geological change speaks to a wider preoccupation in his legendarium with the passage of time. Tolkien's dual generic engagement – both with quest fantasy and mythopoesis – allows him to play with various temporal scales, from the personal, intimate experience of time to the geological, cosmic span of deep time. This attention to human and nonhuman temporalities enables an interrogation of cultural relationships with time and, in particular, the anxieties that are constructed around time, change, and mortality. Although these existential anxieties have been central to the experience of being alive since the beginnings of human history, I want to argue – as in my previous chapter – that the particular ways in which they manifest are a product of Tolkien's specific cultural and social context, that is to say, of the post-Victorian period of scientific advancements and reconfigurations of temporality.

Michelle Bastian, David Farrier, Franklin Ginn, and Jeremy Kidwell argue that modernity, and in particular the science that has emerged from modernity, have had an expansive effect on time scales, so that concepts that have long been understood as having relatively short-term, human chronologies – justice, belonging, memory, and subjectivity – have been cast in new time

frames (214). Taking this argument as a jumping off point, this chapter will examine the ways in which Tolkien's representation of time – underpinned though it is by mythological structures – is an example of this modern reformulation of temporal scale that works to disrupt comfortable relationships with time and the place that humans have in the world. As this chapter is interested in how Tolkien was responding to emerging scientific advancements and their cultural implications, my approach will be more historical than the previous and following chapters, although I will briefly draw on certain ecocritical readings of deep time in order to consider how it reorients the human relationship with the environment.

Employing a telescopic approach, this chapter will argue that the geology of Middle-earth and its combination of uniformitarian and catastrophic events allows the colossal events of deep time to unfold over long geological time scales as well as within certain cataclysmic episodes, thereby both representing the dislocating enormousness of these scales and also concentrating the anxiety of a changing world, the irretrievable effects of time, and the ecological effects of the human within sudden geological shifts. Maps become a crucial embodiment of this anxiety: while the previous chapter confronted the politics of human control in the environment and the role that cartography played in this, this chapter examines how maps act as a means of controlling human anxiety about time and their place in the world. Middle-earth's maps attempt to encode and thus freeze time within a material object,

yet their inability to entirely represent the thickness of time leads to what I term a fossilisation, so that they become historic relics rather than active objects that can represent and relieve these anxieties. Focusing on the personal, this chapter will then examine how Tolkien's engagement with deep time forms part of a wider anxiety in his legendarium about mortality, change, and time on a smaller, biological scale, and how this scale is further complicated by the various races' different experiences of time and mortality. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen terms human history as "shallow and local" compared to the depth and breadth of geological history ('Anarky' 25); this chapter will examine how, through both a shallow and deep approach, Tolkien maps the inevitable anxiety of time's passage.

Section II: Deep time

The discovery of deep time has become a fixed boundary around which various dichotomies have been constructed. Cohen argues that its discovery precipated a "time revolution…on one side of this sudden divide stand those whose relation to prehistory is comfortably mediated by myth…on the other are those whose awareness of geological profundity alienates them from history, troubles their relationship to the earth they inhabit…" (*Stone* 82). On either side of this revolution, then, stand seemingly irreconcilable concepts: religion/science, human/geological timeframes, cataclysm/gradualism. As Cohen notes, and as will be further discussed, this dichotomous approach

erases much of the complexity in historic relationships with time; broadly speaking, however, the discovery of deep time marks a definite yet nuanced shift in contemporary intellectual thought. It further reveals an intrinsic enmeshment between temporality and the physical environment; understandings of time scales both before and after the discovery were informed by theories on geological and environmental change.

Before deep time, the predominant belief, known as catastrophism, theorised that the world was shaped by sudden, cataclysmic events. Catastrophism was largely informed by a desire to reconcile Christian narratives of the Flood and the Apocalypse with geology, and thus theorised a geological framework which incorporated, and was indeed based on, violent catastrophes. It should be noted that not all catastrophists' theories were necessarily entirely religious or supernatural; in his *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1684-1690), Thomas Burnet sought a theory that would explain the Flood without resorting to *deus ex machina*, arguing "[t]hey say in short, that God Almighty created waters on purpose to make the deluge, and then annihilated them again when the deluge was to cease; And this, in a few words, is the whole account of the business. This is to cut the knot when we cannot loose it" (qtd. in Gould 29).[34] Pursuing a more consistent explanation, Burnet suggested instead that the Earth's crust

[34] There is an interesting parallel here between Burnet's conviction that God alone is not enough to explain cataclysms, and that a logical, scientific explanation is required, albeit underpinned by theological beliefs, and Tolkien's theories of sub-creation. In "On Fairy Stories", Tolkien asserts that it is not enough merely to create a world with a green sun; an "inner consistency of reality" is required to make the sun's greenness "credible" (Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf* 45)

floated on a layer of water, which broke loose through the Earth's surface at the time of the Flood. Stephen Jay Gould further draws attention to the at times scientific nature of catastrophist belief: while certain cataclysms were attributed to divine intervention, others were seen to be the product of a cooling earth whose molten interior would contract as it cooled, thereby pulling away from the solid exterior and causing sudden, violent ruptures and upheavals (130). However, despite such attempts at building scientific theses, religious beliefs remained fundamental to catastrophism – even if they did not account for every catastrophe – and particularly to catastrophism as understood before the discovery of deep time. Geological time frames of the pre-Enlightenment period were frequently based around biblical evidence: in the seventeenth century, Archbishop James Ussher tried to date Creation, and thus the age of the Earth, by using biblical genealogies, eventually calculating that the date of Creation was 4004 BC; John Lightfoot, vice-chancellor of Cambridge University, refined this to the morning of Sunday, October 23 4004 BC (Bowler 4).

Catastrophism, and the belief in what is now called Young Earth theory, persisted well into the nineteenth century. However, in the eighteenth century, uniformitarian theories were beginning to gain traction. Uniformitarianism argued that the world had been formed by gradual geological processes happening over aeonic timescales. The theory was developed and popularised by eighteenth-century geologist James Hutton and nineteenth-century

geologist Charles Lyell, who noted that the earth was in a constant cycle of uplift and creation, erosion and destruction, and that geological change was thus gradual rather than sudden (Gould 6). Hutton observed two key things: he recognised that granite, as an igneous rock, represented a counter to erosion, as new rock was constantly being created. He also theorised that the breaks in time represented by unconformities found in the Earth's crust – defined as the meeting point of two layers of unconformable, that is to say periodically or materially different, strata (Allaby 523) – were a result of a combination of erosion and new rock formation (Gould 6). Thus, Hutton theorised that as the earth was caught in these constant cycles of uplift and erosion, it could theoretically be millions of years old, thereby formulating the concept of geologic or deep time.

Lyell supported Hutton's theories in his three volume *Principles of Geology*, published 1830-1833, further linking the concept of a uniformitarian geology with deep time. Lyell compared the study of history to the study of geology; arguing that much as numerous events, both inconsequential and monumental, shaped the course of the former gradually over many years, the same principle of slow gradual change over time needed to be applied to the latter. This new conception of time naturally conflicted with previous, biblically-motivated calculations. Although as Peter J. Bowler notes, it would be a mistake to view uniformitarianism as entirely divorced from religion, particularly in the nineteenth century, the movement did represent a shift away from these

theological models (113). With the arrival of the twentieth century came further uniformitarian discoveries which underlined the deep time theories of Hutton and Lyell and removed religion from the equation entirely: in the early decades of the century it was discovered that certain elements were able to maintain the earth's central heat thanks to their radioactivity, and thus provide stable conditions for billions of years, thereby once more extending the timeline of the Earth (Bowler 130). Around the same time, continental drift began to be theorised, which again supported the idea of topographical change occurring over long periods of time, and which moved even further from the previous religious model.[35] Gould emphasises, however, that catastrophism did not die out immediately following the theory of uniformitarianism, and indeed was not mutually exclusive to theories of deep time in the nineteenth century, arguing that "[a] 5000-year time scale does commit any adherent to global paroxysm as a mode of change, but belief in worldwide catastrophe need not imply a

[35] Tolkien's own position on the age of the Earth, particularly as a Catholic, is not as well established. In 1909, Pope Pius X ratified a decree which declared that the legitimacy of the first chapters of Genesis could not be questioned, particularly in regards to the creation of the world and the creation of man. Although the issue of a time frame is never specifically addressed, the decree nevertheless clearly advocated a literal reading. Anne M. Clifford suggests that this strict stance was an aggressive response to Darwin's theories of evolution which were undermining people's beliefs in the Creation story. However, throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an approach known as concordism was also practiced by many Christians of all denominations. Concordism attempted to reconcile Biblical and scientific theories; for example, the eighteenth-century scientist Buffon theorised that the six days of creation were in fact six "epochs", which would account for the long time frame required by new geological discoveries (Clifford 221–23). It is not known whether Tolkien subscribed to the Church's position or to the more liberal concordist approach. However, there is an interesting parallel between the concordist idea of the days of Creation lasting for epochs, and Tolkien's Valian Years, which were the measurement for time before the creation of the sun and the Awakening of Men, and which are much longer than a normal year span; it is therefore possible that Tolkien incorporated such religious frameworks within his own mythology.

young earth" (112), thereby anticipating the complication of the binary between catastrophism and deep time as outlined by Cohen.

The increasing acceptance of deep time on all sides in the nineteenth century was encountered by what Farrier terms "a sense of vertigo" (9). Farrier invokes James Playfair's account of travelling to Siccar Point on the east coast of Scotland with Hutton, where Hutton observed an unconformity in the rocks that he used as irrefutable proof of his theory of uniformitarianism. Playfair remarks that "the mind seemed to grow giddy by looking so far into the abyss of time", highlighting how the geological rock formations embody not just a material environment but also the very concept of temporality (qtd. in Farrier 10). Farrier further draws on the less frequently cited passage previous to this, where Playfair explains, "[w]e felt ourselves necessarily carried back to the time when the schistus on which we stood was yet at the bottom of the sea, and when the sandstone before us was only beginning to be deposited, in the shape of sand or mud, from the waters of a superincumbent ocean" (qtd. in Farrier 10). Here, not only does geology embed and encode the tangible as well as the imagined effects of time, Farrier also draws attention to how Playfair emphasises the stone's mutability, where "the lithic becomes liquid; the weight of water replaces the weight of stone; the body submerged by rock and sea" (10). Farrier's emphasis on the fluctuation and mutation of geology and rock is emblematic of what Cohen terms "lithic agency" (*Stone* 4), which was briefly discussed in the previous chapter. Here, rock itself becomes cast as an actant

rather than an inert substance in the development of the Earth, whose activity speaks to a geological history that lies outside of human narratives or control. As Cohen argues, "[i]nhuman agency undermines our fantasies of sovereign relation to the environment…" (*Stone* 9); this destabilisation of the place of the human is central to the conceptualisation of deep time, as Bastian et al argue:

> Thinking about deep time is challenging; deep time is strange and warps our sense of indebtedness to earth forces and creatures past, present, and future. Alienation is perhaps the most logical reaction to sublime, inhuman timescales. Confronted by stretched-out temporal horizons, the human figure is marginalised, decentered as measure of all things. (214)

Much as the deconstruction of the human/nature binary decentres the human, as discussed in the previous chapter, the elongation of temporal scales to geologic time also displaces it, resisting "anthropocentric intelligibility" and thus engendering feelings of alienation, insignificance, and vertigo in the face of the inhuman.

This was the contemporary response to deep time in the years and decades following its discovery. However, our relationship to deep time has shifted in recent years following the theorisation of the Anthropocene era and the environmental implications that it has brought to the fore. As discussed in chapter two, the Anthropocene is anachronistic to Tolkien's works, and I therefore do not intend to engage with it at length. However, the Anthropocene's reconfiguration of deep time and its relationship with the human has some relevance to Tolkien's cultural investigation of temporality,

particularly if the Anthropocene is understood not as the theoretical concept or as the specific movement in the environmental humanities, but rather at a more basic level as the unprecedented effect of the human on the earth's geological and environmental structures, which as argued in the previous chapter overlaps with Tolkien's concerns. The tangible effects of the Anthropocene lead to a collapsing of the strict divide between geological and human time, as human time becomes enmeshed in deep time, the consequences of human habitation on the globe enduring long past the typical timeframe of the human through the effects of nuclear radiation, plastic pollution, ocean acidification, and deforestation-induced erosion, to name but a few. Noah Heringman describes it as an "act of writing ourselves into the rock record" ('Deep Time at the Dawn of the Anthropocene' 58), while Farrier posits that the most unsettling aspect of the Anthropocene is "how humanity has radically intruded in deep time" (6). In both arguments there is an idea of encroachment and interference, an emphasis on the unwelcome, unparalleled, and unnatural entanglement of two hitherto alienated temporal scales. The effects of the Anthropocene undo the decentering of the human achieved by deep time, once more complicating categorisations of temporality.

The rest of this chapter will examine how Tolkien engages with different types of temporal scale in his legendarium, and how he uses cartography to map experiences of and anxieties surrounding time. At this point it is worth defining deep time in Tolkien's legendarium, as he never explicitly alludes to the

Huttonian concept of deep time as a framework in which he was consciously writing, and the fantastic elements of his work also complicate human and geological temporal scales. Chronologies form an extensive part of Tolkien's world-building, with many of his Silmarillion drafts given in the form of dated annals and texts. In their discussion of creation, the "Earliest Annals of Valinor" outline that, "[t]ime was counted in the world before the Sun and Moon by the Valar according to ages, and a Valian age hath 100 of the years of the Valar, which are each as ten years are now" (*Shaping* 263). The Elder Days that comprise these annals last 3,000 Valian years, or 30,000 in human years. In a draft some 20 years later, Tolkien's timeline and scale shift: the "Annals of Aman" detail how the Years of the Valar are now

> longer than nine such years as now are. For there were in each such Year twelve thousand hours. Yet the hours of the Trees were each seven times as long as is one hour of a full-day upon Middle-earth from sun-rise to sun-rise, when light and dark are equally divided. Therefore each Day of the Valar endured for four and eighty of our hours, and each Year for four and eighty thousand: which is as much as three thousand and five hundred of our days, and is somewhat more than are nine and one half of our years (nine and one half and eight hundredths and yet a little). (*Morgoth's Ring* 50)

As the Elder Days now stretch to 5000 Valian years, their actual span in human years is expanded to 47,901. In the Appendices to *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien amended this again, terming an Elvish year a *yén* that lasts 144 human years (*Return* 1453), which would expand the Elder Days to 720,000 years. Subsequent Ages of Middle-earth similarly vary according to the stage of Tolkien's world-building, but typically last several thousands of years.

Moreover, in the “Annals of Aman”, there is an explicit blurring of the specificity of time scales: time in Middle-earth is counted from when the Valar come into Arda to create and shape the world, but it is made explicit that previous to this, “the measurement which the Valar made of the ages of their labours is not known to any of the Children of Ilúvatar” (*Morgoth’s Ring* 50), and that it is only “[a]fter ages of labour beyond knowledge and reckoning” that the Valar begin to count time (*Morgoth’s Ring* 51).

There are two readings of this temporal framework. Firstly, that through Tolkien’s emphasis on uncounted time “beyond reckoning” and his expanded timelines Middle-earth clearly has a history that encompasses deep time. However, the other contradictory interpretation is that, aside from the nod to undocumented time, the actual history of Arda from its creation – that is to say, its geological and environmental formation onwards – is in fact not as long as the billions of years of deep time on our Earth. This is further complicated by the immortal lifespans of certain creatures on Middle-earth, such as the Valar, the Ents, Elves, and Tom Bombadil, who disrupt the idea of biological human time as the antithesis to geological time. These important elements of Tolkien’s sub-creation make it clear that the historical and critical theories of time discussed in this section do not simply map onto Middle-earth; however, neither are they irrelevant. Although Tolkien’s sub-creation may not have the exact time span of our own deep time, it nevertheless demonstrates a preoccupation with time outside of memory, geological time, and expanding

temporal scales that has already been discussed and will be further examined in the following sections. Cohen's consideration of deep time from a medieval historiographical perspective moreover points to the need for a cultural rather than scientific application of deep time in certain cases: Cohen argues that although medieval people were working within a catastrophist and foreshortened timeline, nevertheless "time's vastness taxed the imagination…" so that "[e]ven the universalizing and supposedly short chronological framework of the Genesis story has its textual strata, fossils, provocations to dreaming the inhuman, and unexpected geological depths" (*Stone* 82–83). This chapter will therefore consider geologic time in Tolkien using the frameworks outlined above, while nevertheless acknowledging that it does not align precisely with our calculation of deep time. It will further consider the tension between catastrophist and uniformitarian depictions of geology in Tolkien's sub-creation, as well as the tension between different scales of personal temporality through the immortality of the Elves and the mortality of Men, and examine how cartography attempts to represent and control both of these experiences of time.

Section III: Middle-earth's geology

In the most extensive study of Middle-earth's invented geology, Gerard Hynes posits that Tolkien showed an awareness of new developments in the geological sciences in his depiction of the changing world, in particular drawing

attention to how certain passages in the legendarium are reminiscent of the new theory of continental drift. Although Hynes acknowledges that much of Middle-earth's geological framework aligns with catastrophic ideas of world formation, he argues that in the 1930s, Tolkien's world-building began to incorporate a uniformitarian perspective on geological change, informed by the early twentieth century theories of Alfred Wegener on plate tectonics ('Tolkien and Geology' 22). Hynes traces the development of Tolkien's geological ideas from purely catastrophist to uniformitarian: in *The Book of Lost Tales*, he notes that the Vala Ossë drags an island across the sea, however, Hynes also points out that this most likely derives from an episode in the Prose Edda, in which the giantess Gefjon pulls Zealand out into the ocean ('Tolkien and Geology' 24). The catastrophist underpinnings of this are indicated in a passage shortly before Ossë's endeavour, which explicates "[n]ow this was the manner of the Earth in those days, *nor has it since changed save by the labours of the Valar of old*" (my emphasis) (*Lost Tales I* 68), indicating a static Earth model.

Hynes locates a shift in Tolkien's geological framework in the "Ambarkanta" from the 1930s, in which this position is reversed and the geology of Arda is shown to be not just under the influence of the Valar. The narrative traces the damage done to the world by the various battles of the First Age, and notes too that "it has changed ever in the wearing and passing of many ages" (*Shaping* 240), which indicates not only uniformitarian change but also emphasises its gradual pace over a long, sustained period of time. Hynes

notes that this is echoed in a later conversation between Gandalf and Glorfindel during the Council of Elrond in *The Lord of the Rings*, in which Glorfindel suggests disposing of the Ring in the Sea where it can be lost forever ('Tolkien and Geology' 26). Gandalf, however, reminds Glorfindel of the Earth's capacity for change, remarking "[n]ot safe forever…There are many things in the deep waters; and seas and lands may change. And it is not our part here to take thought for only a season, or for a few lives of Men, or for a passing age of the world" (*Fellowship* 347). Hynes argues that here Gandalf is thinking in geological time, highlighting the vast temporal scale of gradual change ('Tolkien and Geology' 27). This interaction also embodies the displacement of human concerns and scales within geology. The Ring and the attempt of the Men, Elves and Dwarves to conceal or destroy it has no effect on the inevitability of geological change; thus, in order to succeed, the Council of Elrond must begin to think beyond human time scales to geological ones.

This shift to uniformitarian frameworks is not all-encompassing, however. Strikingly, as Hynes notes, there is a blurring of uniformitarian and catastrophist principles in Tolkien's geology. In the "Ambarkanta", in response to Morgoth's aggressions, the Valar attempt to create distance between themselves and Middle-earth, so that they "thrust away Middle-earth at the centre and crowded it eastwards, so that it was bended…and the thrusting aside of the land caused also mountains to appear in four ranges, two in the Northland and two in the Southland…" (*Shaping* 239). Here, although the

effects embody those of continental drift with the creation of new mountains due to the movement of the Earth's surface, the event itself is distinctly catastrophic: there is a clear causal link between the foundation of new geological features (the mountains), and the action of the Valar, while the word "appear" suggests an immediate effect, rather than the slow formation of uniformitarianism and plate tectonics.

The end of the "Ambarkanta" also touches on two of the fundamental catastrophic events which define the history of Middle-earth and its formation: the destruction of Beleriand at the end of the First Age and the drowning of Númenor during the Second Age. In both instances, the world is described as being "broken" and "destroyed", highlighting how these events were unnatural, damaging, and negative, rather than part of a natural geological cycle. The "Quenta" describes the destruction of Beleriand in greater detail:

> Thangorodrim was riven and cast down…so great was the fury of those adversaries that all the Northern and Western parts of the world were rent and gaping, and the sea roared in in many places; the rivers perished or found new paths, the valleys were upheaved and the hills trod down; and Sirion was no more…long was it ere [Men] came back over the mountains to where Beleriand once had been. (*Shaping* 157)

The sudden and entire destruction of this part of the world is emphasised through a language of reversal: low valleys are "upheaved", high hills are "trod down", and water both disappears from old river beds and appears in new places, so that the world is literally turned upside down. The finality of "where Beleriand once had been" emphasises the cataclysmic nature of the event,

and is echoed later in the "Annals of Beleriand", which end with "and Beleriand was no more" (*Shaping* 310), highlighting the radical, seismic shift in the topography of Middle-earth. Like the formation of the Northland and Southland mountains, the destruction of Beleriand echoes uniformitarian conceptualisations of geological evolution: the treading down of the high hills is erosive, while the upheaval of the low valleys is orogenic, yet the catastrophic overlay compresses these events within a shortened timescale. While geological events happening in deep time displace the human within Middle-earth, catastrophist events such as these refigure geology within human timescales, demonstrating how geology – much like the environment as discussed in the previous chapter – is vulnerable to external, non-natural forces.

The "Akallabêth", or the drowning of Númenor, further encapsulates this enmeshment between the human and the geological. A conscious variant on the Atlantis legend and one of the key events in Tolkien's mythology, the "Akallabêth" details the Númenórean assault on Valinor, spurred by King Ar-Pharazôn's fear of death and his quest for immortality, and the subsequent and wholesale destruction of Númenor by Ilúvatar, the Creator in response. This destruction is notably geological in character: the Valar appeal to Ilúvatar who transforms the hitherto flat earth into a globe, thereby removing the Undying Lands from the physical Earth and drowning Númenor in the process. The "Akallabêth" represents a key moment both in terms of Middle-earth's

world-building and mythology, as it is here that the flat earth concept which Tolkien originally conceived is altered and replaced by a more scientifically congruent model instead. Both conceptually and descriptively, the destruction of Númenor is as drastic an event as the destruction of Beleriand, and is notably also catalysed by forces external to natural geological change. The description in "The Fall of Númenor" is violent: Valinor is described as being "sundered" from the earth, causing a "rift" to appear in the sea (*Lost Road* 15). Much like the description of the fate of Beleriand, the language here is one of absence, with parts of the old world being physically lost or removed. Tolkien further describes how "Ilúvatar gave power to the Gods, and they bent back the edges of the Middle-earth, and they made it into a globe…" (*Lost Road* 16). The use of the active voice highlights how these changes are being enacted upon the earth by external forces, rather than from natural forces within, emphasising their unusual, cataclysmic nature.

The influence of these external factors upon Middle-earth's geology and the disruption of deep time scales by human ones offers two potential readings. Firstly, the influence of theological catastrophism is evidently very present in these episodes: what is striking about the distancing of Middle-earth from Valinor, the destruction of Beleriand, and the drowning of Númenor is their unnatural, indeed their *super*natural, character. While uniformitarian theory ultimately removed God from geology, catastrophism was frequently linked with divine intervention, and Tolkien closely models Middle-earth's geology on

this characteristic. Each cataclysmic shift in Middle-earth's history is the result of the gods' actions, whether indirectly, such as the Great Battle where Beleriand is destroyed through a large-scale conflict between the deities, or directly, such as in the "Ambarkanta" or "The Fall of Númenor", where the Valar and Ilúvatar are instrumental in repositioning and restructuring the world. This reinforces the catastrophic nature of these events by aligning them with other catastrophic episodes in the cultural consciousness caused by divine intervention, such as Creation and the Flood. The domination of the divine negates lithic and geological agency, refusing the independent mutability of rock and the alienation of the non-natural from both geological activity and its temporal scale, and instead reprioritising human frameworks of signification, such as the divine, the mythological, and the interventionist.

However, the destruction of Númenor can also be read from a further angle that highlights its engagement with human concerns. The previous chapter outlined how an anthropocentric perspective and its tangible effects physically harmed the natural world; the destruction of Númenor can be read in a comparable way. Its cataclysmic event is notable for its anthropocentric roots: the world is globed and Númenor is destroyed because the Númenóreans demand immortality and the Valar seek to defend themselves. More than just a fantastic take on the Atlantis myth, the drowning of Númenor has very distinct environmental and topographical effects: the destruction caused by this globing takes the concept of human-induced environmental damage to the

extreme, by having human activity affect the very foundation and matter of the world. A later account of the destruction details:

> for in some places the sea rode in upon the land, and in others it piled up new coasts. Thus while Lindon suffered great loss, the Bay of Belfalas was much filled at the east and south, so that Pelargir which had been only a few miles from the sea was left far inland, and Anduin carved a new path by many mouths to the Bay. But the Isle of Tolfalas was almost destroyed, and was left at last like a barren and lonely mountain in the water not far from the issue of the River. (*Peoples* 183)

The tidal aftermath of Númenor's destruction entirely reconfigures and reshapes Middle-earth's coastline, once more compressing gradual activities of erosion and sedimentation into a shortened timeline.

The intrusion of the human into the geological in this episode remarkably prefigures the damage of the Anthropocene era, and the enmeshment of the two temporal scales. It must be stressed here that Tolkien was not actively writing a critique of the harmful effects of the Anthropocene; this much is clear given the specific geological, ecological, and biodiverse concerns of the Anthropocene highlighted above, such as plastic pollution, ocean acidification, and nuclear radiation, most of which were not realised in the time that Tolkien was writing his early mythology. Yet it is nevertheless interesting that Tolkien expanded his wariness of human interference in the natural world to include large-scale, geological shifts, in a way that speaks to future environmental concerns. Tolkien further anticipates the collapse between the two time scales that such interference will cause, although in his sub-creation the scale

reduces down once more to a catastrophist model, rather than expanding human temporality to fill the geological. Each of these episodes of geological change is striking for compressing long-scale, deep time uniformitarian change into a human conceptualisation of temporality, but in the case of the destruction of Númenor, the human influence is present not only in the timescale, but in the very foundation of the geological change. Not only does this work to complicate the division between human and geological time in Tolkien's legendarium, the Númenor episode also draws attention to the vulnerability of the whole world – both its surface environment and its deep-rooted geology – to human interference.

As well as complicating temporal scales, these catastrophic episodes also reformulate the very conceptualisation of time's passage. Gould suggests that the fundamental difference between catastrophist and uniformitarian beliefs is not scientific, but rather philosophical. Each group advocates a wholly different perception of how time functions, and their geological theories are fundamentally informed by this difference. Gould argues that catastrophists have a linear view of time, which he terms Time's Arrow, where "history is an irreversible sequence of unrepeatable events […] moving in a direction" (11). Uniformitarians, on the other hand, have a cyclical view of time, termed Time's Cycle, where "[t]ime has no direction" and individual events are part of repeating cycles, and thus have no causality (11). This is corroborated by Hutton's famous comment in *Theory of the Earth* that "we find no vestige of a

beginning, – no prospect of an end" (qtd. in Gould 63) when embracing uniformitarian principles.

This framework of linear and cyclical time is a key sensitising concept for understanding the relationship between geology and time in Tolkien's work. Tolkien's sub-creation, and in particular its background mythology, has a very deterministic character: every cataclysmic event in the history of Middle-earth can be traced back to a single event before the world's creation, that is, Melkor's musical deviation from the rest of the Ainur during the "Ainulindalë" and the introduction of discord and evil into the world. This act is a catalyst for each of the physically disruptive moments in Middle-earth's history: the distancing of Valinor from the rest of the world, the Great Battle which ends with Melkor's imprisonment, and the drowning of Númenor, which is a result of an uprising by the Númenóreans encouraged by Sauron, Melkor's second in command. Its deterministic character is underscored by Mandos' prophecy which is woven into many of Tolkien's drafts, in particular the "Quenta" in *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, which states that Morgoth will eventually escape from his prison behind the Door of Night, destroy the Sun and the Moon and lay waste to much of Middle-earth before finally being defeated. This structure echoes numerous catastrophist mythologies such as the Christian Apocalypse or the Norse Ragnarök. It constructs time as a teleological, linear framework which brings it in line with catastrophists' theories of time as an "arrow", and contrasts it with the uniformitarians, who believed that the ongoing formation

of the world revealed a construction of time with no beginning and no end. Middle-earth's teleological progression predominantly aligns it with this catastrophist framework of time, and also highlights the inevitability of time passing, change, and the prospect of loss and end.

Section IV: Mapping geology and geologising maps

It is this very inevitability of change and loss that Middle-earth's cartography intercedes on. Much as maps represent the natural world in order to demonstrate human control over it, they can also be read as a means of representing and thus attempting to exert control over the inevitably of geological – both uniformitarian and catastrophic – shifts and more broadly, the passage of time itself. As the scale of physical change being discussed here is relatively large, the maps I will be focusing on are small-scale; namely the Middle-earth map (fig. 9), the map of Beleriand (fig. 13), the Ambarkanta maps (fig. 4-8), and the map of Númenor (fig. 14), each of which engages with the geological movements discussed above in various ways. Firstly and most obviously, each of these maps works to visualise the physical changes being described in the text. This visualisation works particularly on the level of the extradiegetic reader who can immediately cross-reference the maps with the texts detailing the shaping of Middle-earth and trace the changes. The ability of the map to chart the process of time is not immediately as obvious on a diegetic level, as very often an immediate comparison between maps is

needed to make the change explicit. However, in a few instances, a reading is possible which suggests that the diegetic Middle-earth mapmaker and map reader is aware of the enormous shifts in their world, and is attempting to record them. The third diagram of the Ambarkanta maps (fig. 6) bears the inscription, “The World after the Cataclysm and the ruin of the Númenóreans”. Similarly, the revised Middle-earth map found in *Unfinished Tales* is labelled “The West of Middle-earth at the End of the Third Age”. Both of these cartographic paratexts embed not only time into the map, but also a sense of history and of passing: the Ambarkanta map points to the idea of a before and after, and a need for remapping, while the Middle-earth map, while less explicitly cataclysmic, situates the map very firmly at the closing of an era. As Stefan Ekman comments, “[a]part from instilling a sense of finality, it accentuates the fact that Middle-earth has a past (three ages of it, at the very least) as well as a future, a Fourth Age from which it is possible to establish the end of the previous age” (*Here Be Dragons* 61). The label in conjunction with the map makes explicit the link between this history and the topography of the landscape: the representation of the world is correct but may not be (and probably will not be) in relation to other ages of Middle-earth.

Another more explicit visualisation of the enormous shifts in landscape also appears in the Middle-earth map, in particular when read extradiegetically alongside the map of Beleriand, which illustrates Middle-earth during the First Age. The map of Beleriand depicts a range of mountains named the Ered Luin,

which wind down the entire eastern border of the map in a straight line from north to south. These mountains are the only topographical element from the map of Beleriand to also be depicted on the Middle-earth map. On the Middle-earth map, however, they are depicted in the extreme west, and their long, unhalting line through the landscape is now disrupted: they curve along the coast in the north-western corner of Middle-earth, and are then interrupted by the Gulf of Lhûn, before resuming again as a short range named the Blue Mountains. To the west of the mountains, just off the coast, is a small island named Himling, a name linguistically very like the similarly positioned mountain of Himring on the map of Beleriand. Christopher Tolkien confirms in *Unfinished Tales* that "Himling was the earlier form of Himring […] it is clear that Himring's top rose above the waters that covered drowned Beleriand" (*Unfinished Tales* 13–14), recalling what also happened to the Isle of Tolfalas in the drowning of Númenor. In a world-building framework where the landscape is constantly undergoing physical upheaval and nomenclatures constantly change, it is striking that traces of the Ered Luin mountains and Himring remain, that their names remain the same or recognisably similar, and that they are depicted on both maps. By visualising the presence of certain places, Tolkien suggests the absence of others, implicating what has been destroyed by showing what remains, and thereby drawing attention to the map's attempt to record the past and to illustrate the extreme physical change that Middle-earth's landscape undergoes.

Despite these attempts, Middle-earth's maps are still at odds with a world that is constantly and radically in flux. Denis Wood discusses the ability of the map to encode temporalities, arguing that a commonly perceived paradox of mapping, that "[e]very map is out of date before it's printed", is in fact not true, and that "[a]nything that changes fast enough to render the map genuinely obsolete before it can reach its audience doesn't belong in the map in the first place" (125). However, in a catastrophic framework where the topography of the world can entirely change within a very short span of time, maps can indeed become not only out of date but entirely obsolete. This is illustrated in *Unfinished Tales* in "A Description of the Island of Númenor", where the physical description of the island is preceded by a short introduction, which explains that the information within is "derived from descriptions and simple maps that were long preserved in the archives of the Kings of Gondor" (*Unfinished Tales* 165). With Númenor entirely gone, these maps can no longer serve their original, intended function as navigational tools and have thus become obsolete as maps. Instead, they have turned into historical artefacts – objects which can offer a window into the past, and which can speak to the catastrophic nature of the world's geology, but which are otherwise redundant. Their placement within the archives of Gondor further underscores their inadequacy as cartographic objects. Unlike other examples of maps in Tolkien's legendarium, such as Thror's Map in *The Hobbit* which is carried around by the characters and is constantly in use, the maps of Númenor have

become static and fossilised as records of history rather than geography, rendered useless by the catastrophic nature of Middle-earth's geology.

The analogy of maps to fossils is a relevant one, particularly considering the period in which Tolkien was writing. By the end of the eighteenth century, fossils had become curios and objects of both scientific and commercial interest. Areas of England where they were abundant, such as Dorset and in particular Lyme Regis, became tourist attractions, and residents of these areas frequently collected fossils from the beaches to sell to tourists (Cadbury 6). Not everyone appreciated the scientific and historical implications of fossils, however; at a time when theories of uniformitarianism and deep time were still on the cusp of being formulated, the presence of stone-like animal remains where no other such animals lived caused great curiosity and confusion. Many turned to a supernatural explanation: fossils were people turned into snakes for their crimes, petrified thunderbolts from God, or the material spirits of animals (Cadbury 7–8). However, some naturalists and scientists began to recognise them for what they were: remnants of a geological past. In particular, French naturalist and zoologist Georges Cuvier worked on classifying fossils, extrapolating from fossilised remnants what the original animal might have looked like. Although Cuvier himself was a catastrophist, his research on fossils nevertheless informed the simultaneous discovery of deep time. Cuvier theorised the idea of extinction, arguing that fossils were an undeniable proof of animals which simply no longer existed in the nineteenth century. Although

fossilised remains of animals such as a woolly mammoth in Siberia and a mastodon in America had been recovered at the end of the eighteenth century, one of the prevailing theories at the time was that these belonged to new, undiscovered species, rather than to ones which no longer existed (Bowler 109). By examining and comparing numerous fossils with the bones of animals living in the nineteenth century, Cuvier demonstrated the reality of extinction, and how fossils acted as a record for what was no longer there.

By Tolkien's time, fossils and palaeontology had become a part of the public consciousness and popular culture: the Natural History Museum in London opened in 1881; the Natural History Museum in Oxford had opened some decades previously in 1850; and numerous literary and artistic works in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries referenced or focused on palaeontology.[36] Tolkien himself had at the very least a passing, childhood interest in fossils. He holidayed four times in Lyme Regis, twice as a child and twice as an adult; on his second childhood trip, Hammond and Scull note that he searched for fossils in the cliffs and found a prehistoric jawbone (*Chronology* 12). It is notable, therefore, that in spite of the attention he gives

[36] In E. Nesbit's *Five Children and It* (1902), the Psammead, a sand fairy dating back to prehistoric times, explains that fossils are the remains of wishes granted by sand fairies, as wishes would always turn to stone at the end of the day; Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (1912) revolves entirely around palaeontology and towards the end, the scientist Sumerlee retires from teaching explicitly to classify chalk fossils; in Noel Streatfeild's *Ballet Shoes* (1936), three adopted sisters are called Pauline, Petrova, and Posy Fossil, so named after their adoptive uncle who is a palaeontologist; in Howard Hawks' *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), the main character is a palaeontologist, shown to be working on a brontosaurus skeleton. For more on palaeontology in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century popular imagination, see Laurence Talairach-Vielmas' "Shaping the Beast".

to his sub-creation's geological history and his attempts to establish a deep time framework, there are no mentions of fossils in Middle-earth.

This absence could be explained by Tolkien's positioning of Middle-earth as the prehistory of our own time; thus, rather than fossils, he creates a world which contains the living counterparts of our modern fossils. Many of Middle-earth's creatures are given a distinctly prehistoric characterisation, which frequently maps directly onto species from our own world's prehistory: for example, of the mammoth-like Oliphants, Tolkien writes, "the Mûmak of Harad was indeed a beast of vast bulk, and the like of him does not walk now in Middle-earth; his kin that live still in latter days are but memories of his girth and majesty…" (*Towers* 864). Middle-earth's dragons, while having distinctly mythological roots, also bear certain similarities to dinosaurs within this prehistoric context, drawing perhaps on the Victorian practice of referring to dinosaurs as dragons. The fellbeasts of the Nazgûl meanwhile are deliberately pterodactyl-like: they are described as looking "like bats" (*Towers* 774), and having "bird-like forms, horrible as carrion-fowls yet greater than eagles" (*Return* 1058). Yet, crucially, the most detailed description of them in "The Battle of Pelennor Fields" suggests that these creatures are considered prehistoric even in Middle-earth's time:

> It was a winged creature: if bird, then greater than all other birds, and it was naked, and neither quill nor feather did it bear, and its vast pinions were as webs of hide between horned fingers…a creature of an older world maybe it was, whose kind, lingering in forgotten mountains cold

> beneath the Moon, outstayed their day, and in hideous eyrie bred this last untimely brood… (*Return* 1099)

Tolkien reiterates that these are creatures "of an older world" in a letter to Rhona Beare in 1958, where he explains he did not intend the fellbeasts to be pterodactyls, but that they are nevertheless "pterodactylic…[their] description even provides a way in which [they] could be a last survivor of *older geological eras*" (my emphasis) (*Letters* 282). Through the fellbeasts, as well other animals such as dragons which are ancient beings that are all but extinct by the Third Age of Middle-earth, it becomes clear that there is a prehistory that predates even Middle-earth's own relatively prehistoric timeframe, which also further emphasises his deep time framework. In early notes on *The Lost Road*, meanwhile – when Tolkien was still considering how to bridge the story of Númenor with our contemporary timeline – he sketches out ideas for where and when his time travelling hero could visit, including "painted caves", "the Ice Age – great figures in ice", and "before the Ice Age: the Galdor story" (*Lost Road* 77), while a later chapter outline includes Chapter V "Prehistoric North: old kings found buried in the ice" (*Lost Road* 78); all suggestions of timelines the hero could visit that predate Middle-earth. Although *The Lost Road* never came to fruition as a Middle-earth story, the inclusion of prehistoric elements and in particular of preserved remnants as part of the main narrative indicates an intention to construct and iterate a prehistoric past and prehistoric residue.

Despite the creation of this prehistoric background to Middle-earth's own timeline, however, Tolkien's final published version of Middle-earth includes no encounters with fossils, either in the shape of its prehistoric-like creatures or in the ideas suggested in *The Lost Road*. In *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, the ancient character of the world is frequently discussed, but it has no physical manifestation in the form of fossilised or palaeontological remnants. Instead, the archival role which fossils would play, where they act as a record of the Earth's physical history – as Cuvier successfully discovered – is fulfilled by other objects, such as maps. This is not to say that the parallel between maps and fossils was a deliberate choice, or that the substitution of the former for the latter was consciously done; rather, this demonstrates that Tolkien turned to other devices to provide the same sort of historical residue that fossils were providing elsewhere in contemporary science and popular culture. Much like fossils, Tolkien's maps are a material remnant of past geological eras, conserved for their historical value and acting as insights into the previous state of the world. Moreover, the maps also speak to the age of the world, by reifying the time span between what they depict and their present condition, and providing tangible proof of this passage of time. However, much as fossils are the relics of what was once alive and moving, maps too are frozen examples of a much more complex world. The static nature of maps such as the Númenor maps in the Gondorian vaults, both in terms of making static the landscape they depict, and their own static position within the archive, lends them many of the connotations of fossils – inert, dead, extinct – and

emphasises both the extreme gap between what they represent (the landscape of the past) and what they are now, and their inability to entirely bridge this gap.

Section V: Fixing experiences of time

Both the maps' efforts and failures to represent a world on the cusp of extreme geological change therefore expose cartography's paradoxical attempt to fix a momentary, fossilised interpretation of the world which is subject to the ravages of time. This paradox speaks to a wider tension within Tolkien's legendarium between Middle-earth's beings, their relationship with their world, and their experience of time, particularly as dictated by their mortality. Tolkien once summarised the essential theme of his writings in a letter to Joanna de Bortadano: "The real theme for me is about something much more permanent and difficult: Death and Immortality: the mystery of the love of the world in the hearts of a race 'doomed' to leave and seemingly lose it; the anguish in the hearts of a race 'doomed' not to leave it, until its whole evil-aroused story is complete" (*Letters* 246). In both cases (Men and Elves respectively), the race's experience of time informs how they relate to and engage with the physical spaces they inhabit.

In the case of Men, their sense of mortality stands in tension with the passage of time. As already discussed, Tolkien's cosmology is constructed around

episodes of change, destruction, and ending; yet Men, who struggle with the idea of mortality, actively resist this idea. The most illustrative example of their resistance to death and the passing of time is the fall of Númenor itself, an event precipitated by Men's desire for immortality. The Númenóreans were already blessed with greater life spans than most Men: in the first draft of "The Fall of Númenor", Tolkien attributes this to the island's proximity to Valinor, and that the people had been "bathed in the radiance" of the land (*Lost Road* 11); in later drafts, Tolkien explicates that these long life spans – and indeed the island of Númenor itself – were a reward for the Men's aid in the Great Battle against Morgoth. However, despite their longer life spans, the Númenóreans were still denied immortality and began to grow discontented, "they murmured against this decree…and their masters of lore sought unceasingly for the secrets that should prolong their lives, and they sent their spies to seek these in Valinor" (*Lost Road* 15). Men's desire for longer life is shown to override all their other characteristics: towards the beginning of the tale, Númenóreans are portrayed as noble, wise, and close to the Eldar, yet within a short time span, they turn to subterfuge, treachery, and eventually violence, motivated by their desire for immortality, and their inability to let go and acknowledge their own brief presence in a changing world. It is ironic that this attempt at gaining immortality and possessing the world is what causes its radical physical change, and the concomitant loss of Men's relationship with the Eldar, as well as their prolonged lives. The Númenóreans' attempt to upset the natural order

is shown to have cataclysmic results, thereby reinforcing Men's temporal limitations and their inability to escape a mortal life.

Men's uneasy relationship with time and their mortality is embodied through their cartography. Their need to map can be read as a representation of their refusal to acknowledge that the world will change, and change without them. The maps can be understood as another expression of their frustration with mortality: by concretising the world around them as it is, and preserving it in a material form, Men attempt to freeze time and the changing of the world, even if only on paper. Their attitude to older maps further indicates this: Tolkien describes how the Númenorean maps in the archive, despite providing some of the only records available for a now extinct land and civilisation, are crumbling into ruin because of "neglect", as "all but a few regarded study of what was left of its history as vain, breeding only useless regret for what was lost" (*Unfinished Tales* 165). Maps which no longer provide the comfort of a world which is still recognisable and obtainable, such as the old Númenor maps, are ignored. These maps act as a reminder of the changing world, the mortality of Men and the hubris of those who attempted to seize immortality, and the insignificance of Men within the wider cosmological sphere.

The Elves, meanwhile, have a different relationship with time due to their immortality. However, as Tolkien points out in a letter to Naomi Mitchison, rather than averting a troubled relationship with temporality, their immortality

does not embrace the passing of time, but instead freezes it: “[Elves] were 'embalmers'. They wanted to have their cake and eat it: to live in the mortal historical Middle-earth because they had become fond of it…and so tried to stop its change and history, stop its growth, keep it as a pleasaunce, even largely a desert, where they could be 'artists'” (*Letters* 197). One of the most striking examples of this attitude and its effects on the natural world is Lothlórien. Lothlórien is caught in a liminal space between the mortal world of Men and the immortal world of the Elves: it is a physical space which can be entered and which borders onto other, mortal spaces, yet it is also a space which unsettles the passage of time which the rest of Middle-earth undergoes. The experience of crossing into Lothlórien reads similarly to crossings in portal fantasies: there is the sense of a threshold being traversed, and a new world discovered. Frodo senses this shift “[a]s soon as he set foot upon the far bank of Silverlode […] it seemed to him that he had stepped over a bridge of time into a corner of the Elder Days […] in Lórien the ancient things still lived on in the waking world” (*Fellowship* 454–55). The disruption of the linearity of time is quite evident in this passage; Lothlórien does not recall the past, or even actively recreate it, but rather exists *within* it, so that the passage of time has effectively been halted. This is emphasised elsewhere: Haldir says Cerin Amroth – a mound in the heart of Lothlórien – “is the heart of the ancient realm as it was long ago” (*Fellowship* 456), and Frodo feels that “he was in a timeless land that did not fade or change or fall into forgetfulness” (*Fellowship* 457). The disruption of linear time is also seen in the collapsing together of different

temporalities: Aragorn re-experiences his first meeting with Arwen, to the extent that he momentarily sees Lothlórien as it was on that day and his own appearance briefly changes to that of his younger self; meanwhile, Galadriel's mirror simultaneously shows the beholder "things that were, and things that are, and things that yet may be" (*Fellowship* 471).

This temporal dislocation can read as a sylvan characteristic: Robert Pogue Harrison argues that "because they lie beyond its horizon of linear time…a protagonist wandering through a forest experiences a terrifying or enchanting loss of temporal boundaries, as if he or she has passed into a world of implications which render our deepest structural categories superfluous or unreal…" (8), so that Lothlórien's resistance to temporal linearity builds on the cultural conceptualisation of the forest as a space void of human rational structures. Verlyn Flieger, however, perceives Lothlórien as a spatial representation of the Elves' relationship with time, namely, that the Elves resist its natural passing, seeking to instil their surroundings with the same immortality that they themselves experience. Flieger points to the conversation between Frodo, Sam, Aragorn and Legolas after they leave Lothlórien as indicative of the Elves' unique experience of immortality and the way in which it is transposed onto their physical space. Sam comments that it was as if time did not "count in there", the word "count" having the ambiguous meaning of both "to matter" and "to add up" (Flieger, *A Question of Time* 93); Legolas then confirms this, his explanation leaning towards the latter meaning: "[Elves] do

not count the running years, not for themselves" (Tolkien, *Fellowship* 506). The rest that Lothlórien offers the Fellowship is thus more complex than that found in places such as Tom Bombadil's home or Rivendell; rather than a mere sanctuary or a site of nonhuman enchantment, as Harrison argues, Lothlórien is a physical and geographical manifestation of the Elves' resistance to time's passage, and thus by extension offers a break from the mortal experience of time as well.

The protection cast over Lothlórien can be seen as positive: it acts as a safe haven for its inhabitants from the evils of the world, and its nature is protected from decay and harm – the preservation of the mallorn trees, for example, stands in contrast to the destruction of other trees throughout Tolkien's legendarium. Flieger points to early drafts of this chapter which make even more explicit the extent to which Lothlórien can be read as a safe haven: the narrative describes how "[e]vil had been heard of…but it had not yet stained or dimmed the air", and that despite the winter, "nothing was dead, only in a phase of beauty…there was no smell of decay" (*Treason* 241). However, as Tolkien explains, the creation of a timeless world only serves to construct a world which is "frozen" and "embalmed", that is to say a world which cannot grow and adapt according to natural changes. The description from the drafts draws particular attention to this unnaturalness: the setting of the action during winter throws into relief the strangeness of the spring-like forest and serves to highlight the discrepancy between the reader's and characters' expectations

of Lothlórien – namely, that it would follow the typical rules of time – and its reality. The full effects of this unnatural state of things are underscored by Treebeard in *The Two Towers*, when he explains to the hobbits that Lothlórien is "fading, not growing" (*Towers* 608), and by Galadriel, who acknowledges that eventually the "tides of Time" will sweep Lothlórien as it currently stands away (*Fellowship* 475). The refusal of the Elves to acknowledge the need for change and their attempt to subvert natural order promotes an artificial stagnation which nevertheless will eventually succumb to the passage of time, thus failing to ease their complicated relationship with their own immortality.

This enforced maintenance of Lothlórien is another manifestation of the control over nature that is practised by the humanoid creatures of Middle-earth. Tolkien emphasises that the preservation of the forest is less rooted in environmental concerns than it is in the Elves' desire to preserve their place in and experience of the world: they want the "peace and bliss and perfect memory of 'The West'" that they experienced in Valinor (*Letters* 151), yet recreated on Middle-earth where they are considered the superior beings. Their unnatural preservation of Lothlórien thus becomes an exploitation of the natural world for their pleasure and benefit. As touched on previously, the Elves' immortality also complicates the division between deep and biological time, yet even this subversion of the boundaries between the two temporalities becomes an intervention of the human into the nonhuman. By unnaturally extending the temporal limits of Lothlórien, the Elves bring their geographical

spaces into deep time without permitting the natural environmental and geological changes that define the passage of deep time. It is not the Elves' immortality itself that disrupts deep time frameworks in Middle-earth, but rather their use of it that problematically recenters anthropocentric concerns in a time scale that should be independent of them.

The mapping of the world on the part of the Elves can be read as an extension of this need, similar to Men's, to resist the changing of the world by fixing it materially in a moment in time.[37] The artificial fixity of mapping mimics the artificial fixity of places such as Lothlórien, and reflects the map's ultimate inability to sustain itself within an evolving world; in this way, maps can be read as another, tangible manifestation of the enchantment cast over Lothlórien. Flieger even points to the mapping of Lothlórien in her discussion of its timelessness, arguing "[w]ithout doubt it is meant to be a real place. It is on the map" (*A Question of Time* 81). However, the question here is not whether Lothlórien is a real place – many of Middle-earth's enchanted places have a physical reality, as will be discussed further below – but how the map relates to the forest's temporal nature. In this case, the map through its own artificial timelessness succeeds in representing Lothlórien, yet it fails to convey the discordance in time between it and the rest of Middle-earth; rather, it portrays

[37] Although there are no explicit examples of Elvish mapping in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* corpus, it can be assumed that Elves have their own cartographic practices: there are archives of maps in Rivendell; Rúmil is positioned as the author of "Ambarkanta", which associates him with the accompanying maps and diagrams; and the map of Beleriand is a product of the First Age when the Elves were the dominant species, and the majority of the place names are given in Sindarin.

both Lothlórien and the rest of the world as an equally timeless place. Thus, not only does the map maintain the artificial fixity of Lothlórien but it extends it to the rest of the world.

Reading the maps as an analogy of this urge to stop time and thereby preserve the world reinforces understandings of the Elves' problematic relationship with their immortality, their fraught position within the mortal world, and their inability to reconcile the two. The comparison also illuminates the paradox of mapmaking itself. Considering Tolkien's maps in the context of the Elves' immortality and its concomitant effects draws further attention to their inherently synchronic nature, and that of cartography more generally, contributing to Tolkien's portrayal of the tension between mapping and change. The fixity of the map resists the passage of time much as the Elves do, so that the practice of cartography can, by its very nature, be read as a characteristically "Elvish" act. The difficulty of reconciling the past and the present, and in particular the sense of loss which arises from this, is moreover emblematic of the personal context from which Tolkien was writing. As Flieger argues, Tolkien's Middle-earth writings are not purely an exercise in nostalgia or a rejection of the present in favour of a romanticised past. Rather, through interweaving the idealised past with the realities of the present, his writing came to reflect "the disassociation, dislocation, and psychological ravagement of modern life" (*A Question of Time* 7): his idyllic, rural Shire is briefly turned into an industrialised dystopia, while his good-natured hobbits are isolated

from the rest of the world and struggle to keep up with it. To these concerns I would add the dissociation and dislocation created by scientific reconceptualisations of time and its variant scales, and humanity's relationship to a world that exists beyond their concerns. Flieger demonstrates that beneath the veneer of neomedieval fantasy is a work which is the product of "the Age of Anxiety in which Tolkien lived and out of which he wrote" (*A Question of Time* 7). The maps, and the concerns surrounding their ability to confront and acknowledge the passing of time, are an embodiment of this anxiety, that is to say, the anxiety of constantly being out of step, of being left behind, and of not recognising a new and evolved world.

Section VI: Maps as representations of anthropological change

Despite this resistance to time passing which both Men and Elves exhibit, their tragedy is that they must nevertheless eventually leave Middle-earth, whether individually through death, as with the race of Men, or as a species through fading, as is the case with the Elves. As with the Númenor maps and their depiction of a now destroyed land acting as a window into the past, the maps of Middle-earth act as vehicles for historical and specifically anthropological contemplation. They are a record of history, except they do not only preserve and illuminate the geology of the past, and how the world physically looked, but also the traces of species who peopled these lands and presumably made and read these maps.

The analogy between maps and fossils is again pertinent here, especially in regards to the Elves, whose experience of leaving Middle-earth is effectively an extinction. As Rateliff argues, the framing of Middle-earth as a prehistory of our own world implies the death and extinction of all the species which no longer exist in it, and in the case of the Elves, this extinction is made explicit throughout the texts. The Elves effectively become extinct in two separate ways: through the act of "fading", and through their departure to the Undying Lands from Middle-earth. The former is a process that all Elves naturally undergo: although originally the Elves were intended to have both immortal bodies and spirits, the evil that enters Aman thanks to Morgoth causes an eventual consuming of their bodies, or hröa, by their spirits, or fëa. Thus, although Elvish bodies are capable of withstanding disease, injury, and ageing and last for several Ages of the world, eventually the dominance of their fëa increases, so that "[a]s the weight of the years, with all their changes of desire and thought, gathers upon the spirit of the Eldar, so do the impulses and moods of their bodies change" (Tolkien, *Morgoth's Ring* 212), leading to the spirit "consuming" or fading the body. The immortal fëa then enters the Hall of Mandos in the Undying Lands, where it waits to someday be reborn. This waning or fading could only be entirely avoided by leaving Middle-earth and returning to Valinor, where the Elves could remain both immortal and incarnate. Thus, Elves inhabiting Middle-earth are imbued with "sea-longing", seen in Legolas when he spies gulls flying above Minas Tirith and is suddenly

filled with an unquenchable desire to cross the sea: “their wailing voices spoke to me of the Sea. The Sea! Alas! I have not yet beheld it. But deep in the hearts of all my kindred lies the sea-longing, which it is perilous to stir…No peace shall I have again under beech or under elm” (*Return* 1143). Legolas’ sudden drive to leave Middle-earth speaks to Galadriel’s prediction that “we must depart into the West, or dwindle to a rustic folk of dell and cave, slowly to forget or be forgotten…” (*Fellowship* 475): whichever way it transpires, Galadriel recognises that power of the Elves is weakening, and their time in Middle-earth is drawing to a close.

Moreover, the extinction of the Elves from Middle-earth is linked to the ensuing dominion of Men in the land. Tolkien first refers to this in his early writings featured in *The Book of Lost Tales I*; in a short introduction to Tol Eressëa he writes, “so it is that the Magic Sun is dead and the Lonely Isle drawn back unto the confines of the Great Lands, and the fairies are scattered through all the wide unfriendly pathways of the world; and now Men dwell even on this faded island, and care nought or know nought of its ancient days” (*Lost Tales I* 25). At this point in the mythology, Tolkien does not portray the fading of the Elves as an extinction from the world, but rather highlights the loss of their land and culture and thus the loss of their sense of belonging: much as their land becomes physically subsumed into the Great Lands that are dominated by Men, so does their culture become neglected and overwritten by the Men that come after. Christopher’s commentary on this section makes explicit the

causal effect the coming of Men has on the Elves' diminishment and frames this effect not only as a scattering but specifically as a decline: "Men entered the isle, and the fading of the Elves began" (*Lost Tales I* 26). The fading of the Elves is expanded on throughout Tolkien's legendarium. In the "Quenta Silmarillion" draft in *The Shaping of Middle-earth*, Tolkien describes how Lúthien faded "even as the Elves of later days faded, when Men waxed strong and usurped the goodness of the earth…" (*Shaping* 134). A footnote referring to Men in the "Quenta Silmarillion" draft in *The Lost Road* reads: "The Eldar […] named them the Usurpers, the Strangers…" (*Lost Road* 245), furthering the idea that Men replaced Elves within the hierarchy of Middle-earth, causing them to fade. *The Lord of the Rings* meanwhile focuses its narrative on the fading of the Elves: Gandalf speaks to Aragorn about how "the time comes of the Dominion of Men, and the Elder Kindred shall fade or depart" (*Return* 1272); the Appendices discuss how the Third Age was synonymous with the "fading years of the Eldar" (*Return* 1272); and the Prologue makes clear that by the beginning of the Fourth Age, the last of the High Elves – Elrond, Celeborn, and Galadriel – had departed Middle-earth, leaving it to the race of Men.

The concept of racial extinction was a popular one before and around Tolkien's time: by the eighteenth century it had become clear that certain races, in particular colonised indigenous peoples, were dying out. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution in the nineteenth century provided a framework to explain

and largely excuse this endangerment (Qureshi 267): his 1871 *Descent of Man* commented that when "civilised nations come into contact with barbarians, the struggle is short" (Darwin 238). Darwin's social evolutionary model was by its nature a progressivist one, arguing for the teleological improvement of mankind. However, the competing theory of the time, degeneration, took an opposite view of extinction. Positioning it as a devolutionary phenomenon, theories of degeneration argued that civilisation was rather moving backwards, and heading to a state of self-destruction and decay. There were two strands of degeneration theory: the first, and earlier one, was influenced by the biblical Fall and the classical ideal of the Golden Age, and argued that modern European society was a degeneration of a "primitive cultural simplicity" (Stocking 36). The second strand, which grew in popularity as the idea of Western bourgeois civilisation became more entrenched, abandoned the concept of the primitive ideal and the "Noble Savage". Instead, it claimed that the so-called "primitive" societies still existing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were the deterioration of a previous, more cultivated society, and that this was the reason for their current obsolescence. For example, it was a widely accepted belief in nineteenth-century America that Native Americans had degenerated from a more advanced state of civilisation, which came to excuse their genocide at the hands of white American colonisers (Brantlinger 50). George Stocking further points out that the 6000 year-old Earth theory served to support this degenerative theory: 6000 years was seen as too short a time for savage groups to have civilised themselves, but was enough time

for nineteenth-century “savages” to have degenerated from a previous, more enlightened state (71).

The parallels between this latter devolutionary model and the situation of the Elves in Middle-earth are clear. The Elves are cast as victims of a shift in their world’s racial hierarchy, and their fading becomes an extinction. Specifically, Elves are depicted as a “higher” and more advanced species than Men: they are the Firstborn of the world, meaning that they have an established culture and civilisation by the time the Men arrive; their immortality places them, both physically and spiritually, closer to the god-like Ainur; and they are depicted as artistically and practically skilled – Elvish craftsmanship is renowned through Middle-earth while Elvish healing is shown to be very powerful. Their replacement by the race of Men is therefore not the ascendency of a superior species, but rather the degeneration of a “higher” civilisation and its replacement by a less cultured, socially advanced, and moral state. Elves thus eventually become an irretrievable species, whose existence and cultural presence can only be traced through, as Rateliff argues, “a word or two, a few vague legends and confused traditions, a smattering of lines of nonsense nursey rhyme, and perhaps a single, battered book…” (‘Mythic Prehistory’ 68). Maps can and should be added to this list: not only do they act as a physical, fossilised remnant of a cultural product from the time of these extinct species, but they also visualise the world that they lived in, and their place in it for those who come after, both for the intradiegetic and extradiegetic reader. The

inclusion of maps in the “Ambarkanta”, for example, points to how cartography is a tool for visualising the world of the Elves as they are the brink of extinction. Within the conceit of the transmission narrative, the maps are included within Rúmil’s description of the shaping of Middle-earth, and are read, translated, and passed on by Eriol. Their inclusion in the “Ambarkanta” demonstrates how they are integral to telling the history of the Elves’ rise and fall, and how they continue to be read through Eriol’s translation even once the Elves have faded.

The extent to which maps can speak to the Elves’ position in the world over time and their eventual fading away is greatly increased by the spatial aspect to their extinction. Jason Fisher has discussed the ways in which the spatial metaphors of the physical world in Tolkien’s legendarium can represent ideas of mortality and immortality. In particular, Fisher focuses upon Tolkien’s “Circles of the World” trope, which is used multiple times throughout *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*. Although ostensibly a phrase alluding to the physical world of Arda, Fisher argues that it “emerges as an eloquent and moving metaphor for the boundaries and limits of mortal lives within Arda” (‘Circles of the World’ 2), and by extension comes to be associated with a transcendence of this mortality: Aragorn’s dying words claim, “[b]ehold! We are not bound forever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory…” (*Return* 1394); the children of Elrond are given a choice either to leave the circles of the world or to become mortal and die in Middle-earth; and after the uprising of the Númenóreans, the Undying Lands were “removed

forever from the circles of the world" (*Return* 1357). As Fisher argues, although the "Circles of the World" are a reference to the physical land of Arda, the use of the trope in key moments depicting the tension between life and death means that they become "an image overflowing with nostalgia and loss", so that the very land of Arda becomes inextricably linked with ideas of mortality, passing, and death ('Circles of the World' 2). The fading of the Elves spans both this spatial and metaphysical dimension: when the Elves leave the "Circles of the World", it is both a reference to a physical act, and to their transcendence of the world's material and mortal limits.

However, even beyond references to the "Circles of the World", there remains a spatial aspect to the Elves' abandonment of the mortal world and their diminishment into the immortal realm of the Undying Lands. The Undying Lands have a strange geographical character. They are portrayed as a distinctly physical space; this is demonstrated by descriptions throughout *The History of Middle-earth*, but particularly in the "Ambarkanta", where the mountains, shores, and sloping lands of Valinor are described. It is also emphasised in "The Fall of Númenor", when "Valinor was sundered from the earth" (*Lost Road* 15), suggesting how the separation of the mortal and immortal lands was a physical process involving tangible objects. After the globing of the earth and the removal of the Undying Lands, the only path of access between them is effectively a road, which can only be crossed by the Gods and Elves, thereby separating Men from immortality both spatially and

metaphysically. This road exists in a liminal space between the metaphorical and the physical. Its description in “The Fall of Númenor” is very hesitant: the old line of the world is described as a “memory” which endures, and the path that remains is “likened” to a plain of air, a straight vision, and a bridge (*Lost Road* 17), without ever establishing in concrete terms what it really is. Yet, much like the Undying Lands it accesses, the path also has a certain physicality: boats sail through it from the Grey Havens, and it is said that Elves and Gods can walk on it.

The slow extinction of the Elves, their fading trajectory through the long Ages of Middle-earth, and their departure from the “Circles of the World” therefore have a physical and geographical manifestation in the road and the Undying Lands. For the most part, these places are not mapped, as most of Tolkien’s maps tend to focus on the continent of Middle-earth. However, both Valinor and the road are represented in those of the maps which depict Arda as a whole, their physical presence made all the more tangible through their cartographic representation. The first is the I Vene Kemen map (fig. 3), found in *The Book of Lost Tales*, where Arda is depicted in the shape of a ship and Valinor is labelled near one of the helms. Maps IV and V (fig. 7 and fig. 8) of the “Ambarkanta” feature Valinor as a land mass towards the extreme west, with recognisable topographical features such as the mountains shielding it from the rest of the world. Diagram III of the Ambarkanta maps meanwhile features a line at a tangent to the circular world, cutting through the layers of

water and air arranged in concentric circles around. This line is labelled “The Straight Path”, and as this map is titled “after the Cataclysm”, it is almost certainly the path to the Undying Lands. When viewed from the perspective of a map reader from the First and Second Age, this representation of the Undying Lands is not surprising, as Valinor was a physical and theoretically accessible place which could be mapped much like anywhere else. From the perspective of later readers and that of the external reader, however, the Undying Lands are no longer merely a physical place; much like Middle-earth itself comes to be associated with the “Circles of the World” and the material boundaries of the mortal world, the Undying Lands have become mythologised, and are bound up with what lies beyond the mortal plane. Mapping them therefore becomes tantamount to recording the narrative of immortality which they encapsulate.

The mapping of “The Straight Path” is another, more explicit example of this. It presents a view of the world after the Cataclysm, that is to say, at a time when the Undying Lands are no longer part of the same physical plane as the rest of the world; their removal becomes a further symbol of the disparity between the Elves and the mortal world. The appearance of “The Straight Path” on the map is effectively a cartographic representation of the physical and spiritual journey of the Elves from the mortal “Circles of the World” to the culmination of their immortal lives. When considered alongside the narrative of the fading of the Elves, moreover, the path becomes a spatial representation

of the temporal process of extinction. The mapping of such spaces allows the maps to become a tool for anthropological as well as geographical contemplation, and for speaking to the time of the Elves and their physical trajectory through the various Ages of Middle-earth.

Middle-earth's geology, cosmology, and anthropology are thus all inextricable from its temporal structures and scales, and from the ways in which cartography attempts to trace, record, and control these relationships. Cartography works to illustrate both the earth's evolution over time, and the characters' relationship with their surroundings as they change; the maps speak to the extreme changes in the earth's geology, while simultaneously acting themselves like geological fossils, providing clues to the parts of the world and its inhabitants which are no more. Tolkien's engagement with both uniformitarian and catastrophic frameworks and his collapsing of the two principles pushes the idea of a changing world to the extreme, and thereby intensifies the tension already inherent in mapping between the fixity of the material map and the fluidity of the evolving world. His engagement with deep time enables a consideration of the anxieties surrounding expanding time scales, and the alienation of the human from these geologic temporalities, yet his fantastic world-building, incorporating both cataclysmic events that compress geological evolution and immortal beings who extend human experiences of time destabilises the division between these temporal scales, thereby offering up renewed anxieties about the inevitability and potential

violence of time's passage, and the impossibility of human practices such as cartography to intervene in or control it. The cartographic representation of anthropological change and racial extinction moreover prefigures further considerations in Tolkien's legendarium of the ways in which cartography can represent and enable narratives of national and racial violence, which form the central premise of the following chapter.

Chapter 4: This Land is My Land: Maps, Power Politics, and Imperialism

Another thing they could not understand was why the foreigner planted a flag in the ground, marked off imaginary lines, claimed that area as theirs…the concept that you could possess land was as unfathomable to them as that of dividing up the sea.

- Isabel Allende, *Zorro* (6)

Section I: Introduction

The principal narrative tension in Tolkien's legendarium can be distilled down to a simple battle between good and evil. The antagonists and protagonists frequently change – Morgoth, Sauron, and Saruman alternately battle the Ainur, the Elves, and Men – and certain stories focus on minor characters and subplots – such as "Aldarion and Erendis: The Mariner's Wife", which only brings in the threat of Sauron at the end – yet the crux of the legendarium lies in the eternal struggle between the two forces and what they represent. Although this tension has numerous moral and philosophical implications that other critics have addressed, this chapter will address a more tangible consequence of this dualistic conflict:[38] its effect on land. The battle between good and evil in Middle-earth is notably frequently cast in terms of a struggle

[38] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage either with the conceptualisation of moral philosophy in Tolkien's legendarium, or with the critical arguments surrounding this philosophy's Boethian or Manichean character. See Tom Shippey's *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* (128-160) for an extensive discussion of this subject.

over land. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf warns Frodo that with the One Ring, Sauron will finally have the power to "cover all the lands in a second darkness" (Tolkien, *Fellowship* 67); in *The Hobbit*, the quest to defeat the evil dragon is implicitly connected with the reclaiming of the Lonely Mountain and its surrounding lands; and in the "Silmarillion" writings, the degree of success or defeat in the confrontations between Melkor and the Valar is determined by the occupation of territory. Throughout Tolkien's legendarium, the landscape is a contested object; it is both pawn and prize in the conflict between Middle-earth's forces, and the struggle for power frequently equates to a struggle for authority over and ownership of land.

This chapter will demonstrate how Middle-earth's land is a politicised object, and examine how Tolkien depicts various narratives of power through relationships and interactions with and over land, including narratives of imperialism, conquest, annexation, and self-defence, illustrated in the constant invasion and occupation of Middle-earth's territories. This chapter will further determine the extent to which the struggle for knowledge and control, both symbolic and physical, of Middle-earth's landscape is then embedded into its maps, and how they visualise and enable the desire both to gain and maintain land, thereby situating Tolkien's cartography within a tradition of highly politicised mapmaking. The political geography of Middle-earth has been discussed in scholarship previously, however it has been largely read through

a historical or world-building framework.[39] My reading of the politicisation of the land in Tolkien's legendarium and its intersections with cartographic practices does not intend to comment on Tolkien's world-building strategies, nor to draw out historical allegories in his territorial relationships and conflicts. Rather, I want to position Tolkien's depiction of land politics as a consideration – and frequent critique – of the various ways in which land is used to create and perpetuate hierarchies of power. I intend to show how these episodes representationally and conceptually intersect with Tolkien's cartography, thus further illustrating the inextricable relationship between the exploitation of the land and its inhabitants, and working to unpack the violent implications of this dynamic.

Drawing on postcolonial ecocriticism, I aim to demonstrate how all conflicts over land in Tolkien's legendarium bear characteristic markers of particular exploitative and damaging models of land politics, including imperialism, colonialism, and war. Although postcolonialism traditionally focuses on

[39] Ekman examines the connections between rulers and their realms, considering how the landscape can be read as a physical manifestation of the ruler's politics and positioning this mimesis as a fundamentally generic characteristic. James Obertino traces the influence of Tacitus upon Tolkien's depiction of imperialism and foreign races, historicising Tolkien's discussions of territorial expansion and confrontation with the other within a Roman framework. Jennifer Harwood-Smith examines how the fractured imagery of the cities of Minas Tirith and Minas Morgul reflects their shifting politics, and the ways in which this contributes to the complexity of Tolkien's world-building. Gerard Hynes and Elizabeth Massa Hoiem meanwhile take a more explicitly postcolonial ecocritical approach, similar to my own: Hynes unpacks the development of the tale of Númenor through its many drafts, examining how Tolkien eventually interweaves imperialism and environmental destruction in order to study the multifaceted consequence of human corruption; Hoiem deconstructs Tolkien's depiction of the colonizer figure in "Aldarion and Erendis: The Mariner's Wife", arguing that Tolkien both critiques and sympathises with the colonizer's position as a "tortured visionary" who nevertheless unjustly dominates lands that do not belong to him (76).

critiques of imperialism and colonialism, in Tolkien, these power structures are evident in various forms of land politics and conquest, including smaller scale territorial conflicts and self-defence of land, as well as imperialist movements equivalent to those of the modern Western world. To distinguish between these, I will borrow David B. Abernethy's definition of imperialism, which states simply, "[i]mperialism is the process of constructing an empire" (20), as well as Edward Said's claim that imperialism is "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory...'colonialism'…is the implanting of settlements on distant territory…" (*Culture and Imperialism* 8) throughout this chapter. By mapping (so to speak) these harmful dynamics produced by imperialism and colonialism onto further models of conflict over land, Tolkien demonstrates how manifestations of power and violence can occur on various scales, and reveals the pervasive damage that any exertion of power over land can have, both ecologically and socially.

Moreover, postcolonial ecocriticism provides a particularly useful lens through which to examine Tolkien, thanks to its focus on modern Western imperialist movements, particularly those of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indeed, both the postcolonial critics and cartographic theorists discussed in the following sections focus specifically on these modern Western forms: Said explicitly narrows his consideration of imperialism to British, French, and American imperialist movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,

while cartographic historians Matthew H. Edney, J.B. Harley and Denis Wood all focus on Western colonisation post-Columbus. Although I am not intending to map these movements onto Tolkien's sub-creation, implementing theories that comment on the period of imperialism that Tolkien himself grew up in will allow me to situate Tolkien's engagement with these questions in a modern rather than historic context. Although Tolkien was not representing these movements explicitly – and in terms of specific structures and episodes was likely influenced by ancient and medieval imperial histories, as detailed in studies such as James Obertino's – the use of postcolonial theory will demonstrate how Tolkien can nevertheless be read as responding to contemporary concerns surrounding imperialism and power politics. In this way, rather than historicising and allegorising episodes of conflict, Tolkien instead uses frameworks of empire and conquest to respond to imperialism and conflict over land through the lens of modernity.

Section II: The politics of the land

Numerous critics have highlighted the simultaneous violence experienced by the land and its inhabitants in the context of imperialism and territorial conflict. In his examination of the psychological, social, and cultural trauma of colonisation in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Frantz Fanon points to land as the crux of colonial conflict on both sides: colonisers want to expand to lands that don't belong to them, while for the colonised, "the most essential

value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity" (44). Although *The Wretched of the Earth* focuses on the social and individual rather than ecological effects of colonialism, Fanon nevertheless positions land – not the abstract conceptualisation of land as nation, but the physical reality of land as habitation and resource – as central to unpacking the harmful power dynamics involved in colonialism. This approach – sourcing the cultural and psychological effects of imperialism and colonialism in the tangible reality of the conquered land – is consciously adopted and developed by Said. Said demands a consideration of culture and art in what he terms a "global, earthly context" (*Culture and Imperialism* 5), arguing that "everything about human history is rooted in the earth" (*Culture and Imperialism* 5). Through his reification of the concept of land into the material image of earth, Said – like Fanon – draws attention to the significance of the physical land in political narratives. This is emphasised multiple times in *Culture and Imperialism*: Said states that "[t]he main battle in imperialism is over land, of course" (*Culture and Imperialism* xiii), defining imperialism as "thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess" (*Culture and Imperialism* 5), and narrowing his examination of imperialist conquest to "actual contests over land" (*Culture and Imperialism* 6).[40]

[40] Fanon and Said's engagement with land contrasts with other critics who define imperialism primarily as an act of economic and political hegemony that is not necessarily dependent on the involvement of physical territory. In "The Imperialism of Free Trade" (1953), John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson coin the term "informal empire", which traces imperial history beyond "those colonies coloured red on the map" and to its roots in the cultural and economic exercises of power in the decades preceding colonisation and formal empire (1). Gallagher

This emphasis on land operates at two levels. Firstly, it makes explicit the centrality of land not only to the practicalities of the imperialist project but to the human experience: as Said explains, "none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography" (*Culture and Imperialism* 6). Secondly, it also draws attention to how land is appropriated into narratives in order to gain power over people, indeed because it is so fundamental to the human experience. In *Orientalism* (1978), Said points to the arbitrariness of territorialisation, arguing that the division of the physical land is a way of "designating in one's mind a familiar space which is 'ours' and an unfamiliar space beyond 'ours' which is 'theirs'" (*Orientalism* 54), thereby creating socio-political narratives through geographical distinctions. Said further draws on the importance of cultural narrative in concretising claims over land in *Culture and Imperialism*: he acknowledges that imperialism is at its heart about land, "but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on

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and Robinson argue that a conceptualisation of imperialism must allow for the "continuity of the process" (5), thereby categorising the formation of physical empire as only one aspect of imperialism's inescapable exercise of power. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel align with Gallagher and Robinson, arguing that empire only forms one stage in modern Western imperialism, sandwiched between informal empire and neo-colonialism (2–3). Barabara Bush further engages with this distinction between physical empire and imperialism, defining informal empire as a territory that is superficially self-governing while remaining constrained by the military or political presence of its formal colonisers, citing Cuba under US power (1900-1959) and China under Western rule (1880-1914) (45). Osterhammel builds on these ideas through the example of American hegemony, arguing that the United States has practised "imperialism without a major colonial empire" throughout the twentieth century (22). Although I agree that these arguments expose crucial power dynamics in the contemporary world and are an important critical framework for highlighting the pervasive ramifications of imperialism, in the case of Tolkien's sub-creation they are not relevant and, as Abernethy argues, stretch the conceptualisation of imperialism and empire "beyond manageable limits" (20). However, they are useful in framing Fanon and Said's engagement with land not as an assumed component of imperialist critique, but rather as a specifically environmental rather than cultural or economic conceptualisation.

it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative" (*Culture and Imperialism* 8). The physical land is thus reshaped and framed through these cultural narratives that perpetuate power structures not only over the land itself but over those who live on it, demonstrating that the physical and ideological conquest of the land equates to the conquest of its people.

Said further demonstrates the simultaneous control of land and people in his two definitions of imperialism detailed above: the former defines it as controlling land "that is lived on and owned by others" (*Culture and Imperialism* 5) while the latter details a focus on "actual contests over land and the *land's people*" (emphasis added) (*Culture and Imperialism* 6). The land and its native inhabitants thus become intimately connected through this experience of conquest and trauma, and the violence that they undergo becomes the same. Fanon and Said balance this tension within their imperialist critiques – framing the land both as a physical object that exists in the realm of the non-human but that is nevertheless vital to the human experience and is frequently appropriated for the use of narratives of power. Both focus on imperialism as an expression of white Eurocentric power, exerted through cultural hegemony but, importantly, begun in the conquest of physical land, so that the conquest of land and conquest of people become inextricably linked. This is ultimately encapsulated in "Yeats and Decolonization", where Said notes the "primacy of the geographical" in imperialist and anti-imperialist movements, further

defining imperialism as an “act of geographical violence” and explaining that “for the native, the history of his or her colonial servitude is inaugurated by the loss to an outsider of the local place, whose concrete geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored…” (‘Yeats and Decolonization’ 77). Violence is thus enacted upon both the land (the geography) and upon the native inhabitants, who experience this violence as both the loss of their land and the establishment of new power structures derived from the acquisition of said land on the part of the colonisers. The intrinsic violence of imperialism thus fundamentally involves both the land and its people.

One of the most interesting critical elaborations on Fanon and Said’s engagement with land is the relatively recent field of postcolonial ecocriticism. Postcolonialism and ecocriticism have traditionally been regarded as separate: Rob Nixon speaks of a “broad silence” between the two (‘Environmentalism and Postcolonialism’ 233), arguing that this critical gulf is exacerbated as “postcolonial writing and criticism largely concern themselves with displacement, while environmental literary studies has tended to give priority to the literature of place” (‘Environmentalism and Postcolonialism’ 235). Nixon advocates for a shared discourse that can disrupt these binaries and lead to “a more historically answerable and geographically expansive” reconfiguration of what constitutes the environment (‘Environmentalism and Postcolonialism’ 247). This approach has been adopted by scholars such as Elizabeth M.

DeLoughrey and George B. Handley, who seek to construct a critical framework that bypasses the traditional nature/culture binary and is instead attentive to the ways in which colonialism harms both the environment and the people that live in it, often simultaneously and reciprocally.

DeLoughrey and Handley expand on Said's arguments, similarly foregrounding the essential role that land plays in the process of imperialism and colonialism. Yet they also refocus the argument to consider the land and, more broadly, the environment and the non-human as their own subjects. While Said largely viewed land and environment through an anthropocentric lens – that is to say, as a site of habitation and loss for human subjects – DeLoughrey and Handley demonstrate how the land experiences the violence of colonialism in its own biophysical way, through long term ecological effects such as "pollution, desertification, deforestations, climate change, and other forms of global environmental degradation…" (4). DeLoughrey and Handley moreover frame the environment not only as a victim but also as a subaltern subject in the imperialism and colonialism. This aligns the environment with its native, oppressed inhabitants and emphasises the mutuality of their experiences. As they argue, this demonstrates the importance of bringing together the discourses of postcolonialism and ecocriticism, as the environment becomes considered a casualty of imperialism and colonialism in its own right: "a participant in this historical process rather than a bystander to human experience" (4). DeLoughrey and Handley's arguments reemphasise

the centrality of land to imperialism and colonialism, and draw focus to both the human and non-human consequences of these acts.

Like Said, DeLoughrey and Handley also explain how the landscape can be used to speak to both human and non-human experiences of trauma. As colonial powers by nature attempt to repress the history of their violence in the realm of the human, the land and ocean become "crucial as recuperative sites of postcolonial historiography" (8), that is to say, they evidence the colonial violence that they have undergone and imbibed and can thus speak to the history of colonialism that took place in them. This elaborates on Said's idea of a geographical violence that encompasses both the land and the people in it. DeLoughrey and Handley argue that the environment experiences imperial violence both separately and alongside its inhabitants: separately, in that the effects are specifically ecological and are harmful regardless of human experience, and together, in that their trauma can be used to fill in each other's silences. In this way, DeLoughrey and Handley maintain Fanon and Said's definition of imperialism as a process that fundamentally involves both the land and its people, yet their work begins to mesh the fields of postcolonialism and ecocriticism in order to consider how both the human and non-human are equally and explicitly – in Nixon's terms – displaced, if not in a strictly spatial sense, then within hierarchies of power and oppression.

Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin also reiterate the need for an overlap between postcolonial and ecocritical discourses. In *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (2015), Huggan and Tiffin argue that if the subject of postcolonial study is colonialism, its study must therefore encompass the "colonial/imperial underpinnings of environmental practices" (3). Huggan and Tiffin too are occupied with the land and the people's mutual experience of colonialism and imperialism. In particular, they focus on what they term "environmental racism", defined by Deane Curtin as the connection between race and the environment, so that "the oppression of one is connected to, and supported by, the oppression of the other" (4). Huggan and Tiffin argue that in a world where the non-human, defined as the environmental, the natural, and the animal, is considered "other" – thus aligning with DeLoughrey and Handley's idea of the environment as subaltern – the native inhabitants of colonised spaces are also incorporated into this othered and inferior state. The native inhabitants are thus racialized as primitive, uncivilised, and animalistic – much like their environment – which is assimilated into an ideology that justifies and validates imperialism and colonialism. Huggan and Tiffin's discussion of environmental racism illustrates how both the land and its inhabitants are purposefully subsumed into a hierarchy of power which requires them to be uncivilised and empty both spatially and developmentally in order to be exploited.

These various readings of the power relations inherent in imperialism and colonialism all point to the centrality of the land both in executing and receiving these manifestations of power. While Fanon and Said point to the physical reality of land as a site of habitation and cultural importance for the native inhabitants who are deprived of both their land and their power through the processes of imperialism and colonisation, the postcolonial ecocritics unpack the tangible ecological effects that imperialism and colonialism have upon the land, and consider the ways in which this violence speaks to and intersects with the violence inflicted upon its human casualties. Ultimately, however, these frameworks all articulate the ways in which land is used and exploited in order to perpetuate power, both over the non-human and those humans considered non-human. These hierarchies of power are apparent in the various imperialist structures in our world, and are also prevalent in Tolkien's sub-creation, which seeks to illuminate the harmful effects that they can have.

Section III: The politics of the map

As a crucial method of representing and narrating the land, cartography is also complicit in contributing to and perpetuating these hierarchies of power. As argued throughout this thesis, mapping is an inherently political act that is fundamentally concerned with the maintaining and exerting of power both over the land and the land's inhabitants, yet the explicit and implicit biases and

perspectives of the map are often disguised by its pretence at objectivity. As Wood and John Fels argue,

> [t]he dominant view of modern Western cartography since the Renaissance has been that of a technological discipline set on a progressive trajectory. Claiming to produce a correct relational model of terrain, maps are seen as the epitome of representational modernism, rooted in the project of the Enlightenment, and offering to banish subjectivity from the image. (6)

With the advent of scientific surveying techniques and new representational technologies, the post-Enlightenment map became an aspirational model of objectivity and impartiality, as was discussed in chapter one. However, in practice, the map cannot be separated from the political environment which produced and uses it. Wood highlights that all maps "inevitably, unavoidably, necessarily embody their author's prejudices, biases, and partialities" (24), while Harley describes maps as a "way of conceiving, articulating, and structuring the human world which is biased towards, promoted by, and exerts influence upon particular sets of social relations" ('Power' 278). Both Wood and Harley position the map as a form of text which imbibes, encodes, and projects a particular politics: seen in what the cartographer chooses to represent and what they choose to omit, in the map's reinforcement of potentially contested spaces such as borders and territories, and in its use of paratextual legends to guide the reader through the map. It is moreover not only the system of production which politicises the map, but also how the map is deployed. From attesting property rights over private pieces of land to

exploring and claiming new lands during imperial expansion and warfare, maps are used to demonstrate ownership of and power over land.

Imperialist mapping in particular highlights the extent to which cartography can be used as a political tool, and further speaks to the intersection between the conquest of land and the conquest of people. Edney examines how maps were used in the nineteenth-century British imperialist conquest of India, arguing that the mapping of the Indian territory became an extension of the "geographical violence" of imperialism, where every inch of the land is examined, calculated, valued, and brought under a new political – and in this case also textual – control (24). Edney argues that imperial mapping works to recreate and reaffirm the empire in another medium, "subsuming all individuals and places within the map's totalising image…" (24). The imperialist project therefore occurs twice: firstly, in the claiming of power over the lands, and secondly in the claiming of a complete and encompassing knowledge of the lands through their representation. Harley reinforces this argument, emphasising that imperial mapping was not only a practical tool for gaining knowledge and control over unknown spaces, it was also "used to legitimise the reality of conquest and empire" ('Power' 282). In this way, imperial cartography becomes a manifestation of how land is administered after it has been conquered – as discussed by Said – and how the issues of who owns it and who has the right to settle and work on it become decided in narrative – in this case in a cartographic narrative.

Wood, Fels, Harley, and Edney's arguments all hint at the Foucauldian relationship between power and knowledge which the map exemplifies, and which lies at the heart of its political activity. As outlined in the introduction to this study, the connection that Foucault draws between forms of knowledge and systems of power easily applies to spatial and geographical concerns. Foucault explains, "[t]here is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge, relations of power which pass via knowledge and which, if one tries to transcribe them, lead one to consider forms of domination designated by such notions as field, region, and territory" (*Power/Knowledge* 69). Maps come under these forms of domination: in every example of mapping, there is a knowledge of the territory, and in particular an assumed truth about the territory, which the map attempts to convey. The map and its makers are therefore placed in the privileged position of the historian in Foucault's historiographical critique: they act as gatekeepers to the truth about the lands they represent. This intertwining of knowledge, representation, and power affirms the political nature of the map. As Harley argues, "the map cannot escape involvement in the processes by which power is deployed" ('Power' 279). The map thus becomes a means of declaring both knowledge and power over an area, rendering it a key tool for imperialist intentions or other means of geographical conquest and control.

This chapter will examine how the land can be read through these frameworks of power and conflict. It will firstly establish the politicisation of the land in Middle-earth by examining the various models of claiming, ruling, and belonging to land, and how this works to facilitate subsequent incidents of conflict by designating, as Said expounds, spaces that are "ours" and "theirs". It will then examine how borders are used to simultaneously encapsulate control and loss of land, exploring how their mapping speaks to the Foucauldian idea of knowledge and power, and the significance of the threshold space in demarcating both the boundary of the land and the boundary of *power* over the land. Building on the notion of borders as defensive structures, this chapter will further examine the self-defence and reconquest of fraught territories and consider how dynamics of power shift when the conquest is, so to speak, morally sanctioned. These areas become – as Huggan and Tiffin termed it – sites of recuperation, both of the land and of power, and maps aid in this reclamation of power. Moving on to offensive conquests of land, this chapter will finally examine both small-scale territorial conflicts over land, and large-scale imperial and colonial acts. Both Abernathy and Said's definitions outlined in the introduction speak to the importance of scale when defining imperialism: for the purposes of this chapter, imperialism in Tolkien's legendarium is an act that attempts to construct a far-flung empire. This distinction will permit a consideration of some of the particular power dynamics that come with this large-scale domination; however, in this chapter, I intend to demonstrate how all conflicts over land contribute to the

geographical violence that Said discusses, and the simultaneous environmental and human costs that this has.

Section IV: The politicisation of Middle-earth

The politicisation of the land of Middle-earth is immediately established through the different ways in which land is possessed. Whether through formal governance or a personal sense of belonging and kinship with the land, there are various models of relationships with land in Middle-earth which work to politicise the land, by transforming it into an object which has either exploitable or private value. These models can largely be divided into these two groups: those who view land as something to be governed, exploited, or as a means towards further political power and gain – that is to say, those whose relationship with land is purely instrumental – and those whose ownership of the land is motivated by love of home and a sense of belonging. Both models engage with the land as a physical object that affords them either power or cultural identity.

The exception to this binary model is, of course, the character of Tom Bombadil, as discussed in chapter two. Tolkien's 1954 letter to Naomi Mitchison is worth recalling here, in which he explains that while Tom Bombadil is not narratalogically important, he serves as a sort of comment on the power dynamics in Middle-earth:

> The story is cast in terms of a good side, and a bad side, beauty against ruthless ugliness, tyranny against kingship…but both sides in some degree, conservative or destructive, want a measure of control. But if you have…renounced control, and take your delight in things for themselves without reference to yourself, watching, observing, and to some extent knowing, then the question of the rights and wrongs of power and control might become utterly meaningless to you, and the means of power quite valueless. (*Letters* 178–79)

Tolkien's argument here is that while there are people in Middle-earth who are motivated by higher ideals of beauty, integrity, and care, their defence of these beliefs still demands an element of control. Applying this model to land, both those who exploit land as a tool for power and those who claim it out of a sense of love and belonging – the destructive versus the conservative, in Tolkien's words – are nevertheless involved in the control over and politics of land. Tom Bombadil, who as Tolkien argues, has renounced control to such an extent that power itself has become meangingless, is exempt from this binary. This is not to say that he is an apolitical character – he aids the hobbits in their quest and Tolkien is explicit further in this letter that he would not survive Sauron's dominion over Middle-earth – but his relationship with the land is exterior to politics.

Tom Bombadil's exceptionalism serves to reinforce the inherently politicised nature of all other relationships between the land and its inhabitants, whether formed through formal structures of power or through an affinity with the land. The former model is embodied in the various manifestations of political governance and control in Middle-earth's history. Large kingdoms such as

Gondor, and Arnor mimic a medieval feudal system, where different regions such as Dor-En-Ernil and Ithilien are ruled by "princes" who have been given power over the land by the king of the realm and who remain answerable to him.[41] The land is thus populated, controlled, and possessed on several levels, leading to a sense of total ownership.[42] There is notably no real personal connection to the land at any stage of the hierarchy: the princes are effectively assigned territories to rule, while for the king, these territories become a way of maintaining power and control, both over his deputies and over the land itself. The personal and individual specificities of the territory are thus not pertinent to the arrangement; rather, the land merely becomes a means to further establish or gain power.

The establishment of the kingdom of Rohan is a further example of land being used as a means of building and maintaining power relations. When a host of wild men from the North-east and orcs from the Misty Mountains converge on Calenardhon (a region of Gondor), the Gondorians call for aid from their allies, the Éothéod, led by Eorl. When these Men help them to drive away the invaders, Cirion the Steward of Gondor gifts Calendardhon to Eorl and his people, who until this point had been living in the valleys of Anduin, where "they had grown to be a numerous people and were again somewhat

[41] R. C. Davis draws attention to the highly political nature of the land in medieval feudal societies, arguing that "the key to public authority, including the rights to do justice, to collect taxes and to demand military and other services, lay not in holding public office but in the possession of landed property…" (344).
[42] The use of the term ownership signifies a metaphorical sense of possession rather than a literal sense of proprietorship.

straitened in the land of their home" (Tolkien, *Return* 1395). Here again, land is used as a means to a political end. Cirion uses the region of Calendardhon to reward Eorl for his help in the protection of Gondorian land, and to thus reinforce and concretise the alliance between the two peoples. For Eorl and his people, meanwhile, the region of Celendardhon becomes a means of escaping their previously straitened circumstances, and establishing themselves as a powerful kingdom in Middle-earth. They therefore leave the "land of their home" and establish themselves in this new, foreign territory in order to expand their prospects.

Meanwhile, other examples of instrumental land use frame the land itself as literally exploitable. Smaug invades and claims the Lonely Mountain in search of the treasure hidden in its cavern. Saruman and the Númenóreans both seize land in order to use and abuse its natural resources: Saruman hacks away at the forest of Fangorn in order to "feed the fires at Orthanc" (*Towers* 617), and only cares for the land's natural resources "as far as they serve him for the moment" (*Towers* 616), while the Númenóreans establish ports in Middle-earth and deforest the land around there at a "devastating" rate (*Unfinished Tales* 263). Hynes draws attention to the symbiotic relationship between imperialism and deforestation in the Númenor story, arguing that the exploitation of the land for its trees forms part of a wider narrative of harmful power politics on the part of the invading Númenóreans ('Empire, Deforestation' 124). These episodes articulate DeLoughrey's, Handley's, and Huggan and Tiffin's

arguments on imperialism and its biophysical impact on the environment. By demonstrating how land can be claimed and exploited for material gain and profit, and the ways in which this intersects with the exploitation of people, Tolkien shows how the land acts as a source of political power. Although the specific pieces of land being mined for their resources have no intrinsic value to the invaders, they gain value through the ways in which they can materially augment the political or military force or personal power of those who have claimed them. As with the transactions of territory discussed above, land continues to be a means to maintaining and gaining power, rather than an end in and of itself.

The second model, where the relationship between the land and its inhabitants is driven by love and a sense of belonging, stands distinct from these exertions of power, yet remains nevertheless political. This is because these relationships to the land, despite their nurturing rather than instrumental nature, still exist within a context of conflict and possessiveness. Thus, although the inhabitants of these lands may be motivated by love, they nevertheless still view the land through a lens of mutual belonging, and are thus prepared to defend both it and their way of living on it. These lands may be free of the hierarchical politics present elsewhere, but through forming such an integral part of the personal and cultural lives of their inhabitants, they also become central to their political stances, whether this be the protection of their home or of the wider environment. Fanon's conceptualisation of the land as a

source of both bread and dignity is a useful prism through which to consider the connection between the native inhabitant and their land when motivated by belonging. It suggests a relationship that is predicated on both physical and sociocultural factors that benefit the inhabitant on an individual level.

The politicisation of personal connections to land is best seen in the relationship between the hobbits and the Shire. As discussed above, the Shire represents a distinct move away from the hierarchical and exploitative relationship present elsewhere. Notably, it features a more relaxed governmental system: although it technically belongs to the Kingdom of Gondor and is thus part of the same feudal system as the previously mentioned regions, its relative political and geographical insignificance leads to it being largely forgotten, so that it effectively becomes a self-governing territory. Indeed, the prologue makes it explicit that Shire hobbits were "in name" subjects of the king, but were in practice ruled by their own chieftains (Tolkien, *Fellowship* 6). The Prologue further makes explicit that the Shire has "hardly any 'government'", and that control of the area is kept very local, to the extent that "families for the most part managed their own affairs" (*Fellowship* 12). Notably, the two official authoritative positions in the Shire's political system – the Thain and the Mayor – are emphasised as being largely titular and ornamental: the Thainship has "ceased to be more than a nominal dignity", while the Mayor's duties revolve around ceremonial feasts (*Fellowship* 12). Power and politics are thus entirely decentralised.

Despite political decentralisation, other forms of power relationship persist, such as private ownership of land divided along class lines. As is the case with the Tooks and Tookland, certain wealthy families and clans own large areas of land and indeed even have it named after them; the eponym highlights the way land is privately owned and connected with its inhabitants. However, it is notable that regardless of the amount of land they own, all hobbits are shown to have a strong, almost primal connection to their individual part of the Shire, conveyed through their physical interaction with it. Rather than being manifestations of power or sovereign control, acts of farming, gardening, burrowing, or other material forms of shaping and maintaining the land demonstrate both the bond and the sense of belonging that hobbits have with their homeland. These connections transcend class divisions; a landless gardener such as Samwise Gamgee feels as fundamental a sense of belonging as the landed and wealthy Tooks. The exclusively agri- and horticultural nature of the hobbits' activities again recalls Fanon: the land is framed as a source of physical and emotional nourishment for the hobbits, and they nurture the land in return. This reciprocity differentiates the relationship of the hobbits to their land from the ecologically exploitative activities of the Númenóreans and other invaders.

However, this strong sense of affinity is also what leads to territorialisation, to the patrolling of borders, and to the defence of the land from strangers.

Although the hobbits' strong and persistent personal connection to their homeland is particularly notable, Tolkien provides other instances of territorialisation due to love of home. For example, an individual such as Beorn who does not belong to any established community and thus has no political, cultural, or administrative territory to speak of has a strong sense of protectiveness over where he lives: as soon as Thorin's company cross into Beorn's fields, his animals go to warn him, and it is said that he "never invited people into his house, if he could help it" (*Hobbit* 159). Even though Beorn's land does not belong to a wider political territory, it nevertheless becomes politicised, in that access to the land becomes an issue of maintaining and exercising power and control.

Throughout Middle-earth's history, the territorial attitudes of both individuals and communities create a complex network of power relationships over and between land/s which further emphasise the land's political nature. Land politics is thus defined not only as the political structures set up within particular regions, and the ways in which they use land to gain and maintain political power, but as any process of belonging to or territorialising land, and the concomitant coalitions and conflicts which arise out of these processes. The politicisation of the land means that it can be fought over, threatened, or used as a manifestation of power, whether that be the power to oppress others, or the power to fight off invaders and protect what is yours. Politicisation of the land thus paves the way for conflict over areas of land, between those who

want to take land and those who are connected to it and want to protect and maintain it. The remainder of this chapter will focus specifically on power relationships over contested areas of land rather than on how power is manifested through the ownership of one's own land, that is to say on the politics of spaces that are being claimed, controlled, or conquered. By focusing on these contested spaces, this chapter will explore how mapping accounts for and contributes to this tug-of-war politics, by inscribing claims of power over the inert landscape onto a tangible artefact and thereby legitimising them.

Section V: Defensive borders

For an act of invasion to take place, the different political spaces of Middle-earth need to be explicitly demarcated so that they may be occupied by opposing forces. The threshold is of particular importance in this. As previously discussed, Said outlines the use of borders in creating distinct cultural or political spaces, claiming that "this universal practice…designat[es] in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond "ours" which is "theirs"…" (*Orientalism* 54). By thus demarcating political spaces, the border both enables the act of invasion, by creating "other" territories which can be invaded and appropriated, and resists it, by offering a physical and tangible opposition to the assault. Middle-earth is filled with such borders that not only demarcate political spaces but that also act as defensive structures against potential invaders. There is a constant anxiety surrounding these

spaces and their effectiveness in warding against threats: when Gandalf counsels Théoden about Saruman's treachery, he claims that it was easy to spy on Rohan, "for your land was open, and strangers came and went" (*Towers* 680), while in the Shire, the number of Bounders (hobbits that patrol the borders) is said to have greatly increased due to the increase in strangers at the Shire boundaries, "the first sign that all was not quite as it should be" (*Fellowship* 13). This anxiety immediately positions the border as a tipping point in the act of territorial invasion and control, and highlights its ability to both reject and invite in the outside world.

This dual role is encapsulated in the Gondorian border at Minas Tirith. Pippin's first encounter with the city is Rammas Echor, the defensive wall that surrounds the Pelennor fields outside the city. Drawing inspiration from medieval walled cities, Rammas Echor acts as Minas Tirith's main defence, and was built following various Gondorian defeats and loss of land. Its purpose is thus explicitly tied to the protection and maintenance of Gondorian land. The scale of the wall is emphasised multiple times: it "loom[s]" out of the mist, has been built "high and strong", and encircles the city for over ten leagues (*Return* 981). Gandalf and Pippin are challenged as soon as they approach the wall, and a suspicious guard informs them that "we wish for no strangers in the land at this time" (*Return* 979), positioning Rammas Echor as part of a system that works to reject Said's unfamiliar other. Yet the wall is also vulnerable: it is "partly ruinious" and is being hastily repaired as Gandalf and Pippin approach

(*Return* 979). The fragile state of the wall, and by extension its inability to act as a successful border, can be read as the key reason why Minas Tirith is so easily invaded by Mordor's army; a fact foreshadowed by Gandalf, who warns "you are over-late in repairing the wall of the Pelennor. Courage will now be your best defence…" (*Return* 980). The failure of Rammas Echor to act as a defensive structure has prompted comparisons to the French Maginot Line, a failed defensive wall constructed along the French border with Switzerland, Germany and Luxembourg after World War I in order to protect against any future German attacks. The wall's fortifications were weak along the north near the Belgian border, as the French believed the terrain too difficult to allow for an attack, which ironically allowed German forces to take advantage of its vulnerabilities and invade France. Shippey comments on the pointlessness of Rammas Echor in Gondor's defensive strategies, arguing that Denethor's insistence on defending it is depicted as a mistake both militarily and personally, in that "all it does in practice is to obstruct the arrival of the Rohirrim" as well as almost kill Faramir (*The Road to Middle-Earth* 170), thereby mirroring the futility of the Maginot Line. The historic parallels between the two cement the contradictory character of Rammas Echor, as both an extensive and ambitious fortification, and as a failed defensive tool. This simultaneous characterisation of the wall – as both high and laid low, strong and fragile – embodies both the frustrated attempts of the border's defence, and the effective attack of the conquering army, thereby concurrently encapsulating both sides – the attack and defence – of the invasive act.

The physical presence of Rammas Echor is only part of the wall's defensive mechanism, however. The guard on the wall acknowledges that Gandalf knows "the pass-words of the Seven Gates" (*Return* 979) and is thus free to go forward. This is part of a wider pattern in Tolkien's legendarium of threshold spaces being policed through knowledge as well as strength. In Mordor, it is not only the physical impenetrability of the Black Gate and its surrounding walls that frustrate Frodo and Sam's attempts to cross the border, but also the requirement of "the secret passwords that would open the Morannon, the black gate of [Sauron's] land" (*Towers* 832), and the eyes of the Watchers at Cirith Ungol. At the entrance to the mines of Moria there is another password-controlled border: the solution to which requires an explicit knowledge of the Elvish language, thereby further limiting who can pass beyond it.

The ancient Elvish city of Gondolin embodies both of these strategies. Like Minas Tirith and Mordor, the city is protected by walls and gates. What is striking is that Gondolin's defences accrue throughout Tolkien's writing process. In the earliest draft, "The Fall of Gondolin", only three gates are mentioned: the two gates which close off the city's outer walls, and the main gate of the city. In the much later 1951 draft which appears in *Unfinished Tales*, "Of Tuor and his Coming to Gondolin", the city is now protected by seven gates, each of them named: the Gate of Wood, the Gate of Stone, the Gate of Bronze, the Gate of Writhen Iron, the Gate of Silver, the Gate of Gold, and the

Gate of Steel. Gondolin fantastically exaggerates the medieval walled city: its Seven Gates suggest a complete containment and protection of the city, both through their high number, and through their use of various natural materials which ascend in strength, value, or complexity.

However, Gondolin's defences lie in its inaccessibility as well as its impregnability. Known also as the Hidden City of Turgon, the city is located deep in the Encircling Mountains and its location is known to only a few, so that it resists capture for centuries. The exclusivity of this knowledge is portrayed as key to the city's protection: the Elves refuse to come to the rescue of their comrade Húrin for fear that he will lead enemy forces to them; Tuor – a stranger's – presence is only enabled and legitimised through the aid of the patron God of the city, Ulmo; and the city ultimately falls when one of its own betrays this secret knowledge to Melkor. Gondolin and all the other knowledge-protected cities of Middle-earth speak to Foucault's knowledge-power dynamic, in that they employ knowledge to create and maintain a power dynamic over the land; but whereas in Foucault's model, the manifestation and representation of knowledge gives power, here it is the containment and withholding of knowledge which allows power to rest with certain groups.

This containment of knowledge is emphasised through the mapping of these border spaces. Despite being primarily navigational objects, Tolkien's maps rarely illuminate passage through these areas. Minas Tirith and the Black Gate

are both portrayed on the Middle-earth map (fig. 9) and the map of Rohan, Gondor, and Mordor (fig. 4), but there is no specific path or access indicated, and no mention of the passwords required. Gondolin, meanwhile, is depicted on the Beleriand map (fig. 13), but its depiction only underscores its impenetrability: it is entirely surrounded by mountains with no throughway. The exception to this is Thror's Map (fig. 1), which both depicts the Lonely Mountain and explains how to access its secret entrance through the moon runes on the left-hand side. Yet the use of moon runes – readable only to some, and only in certain celestial conditions – and the careful passing down of the map to the next heir, limits how this knowledge is distributed.

While these borders reflect the anxiety of invasion through the way in which they control the distribution of knowledge of the border area, other representations or absences of borders on the Middle-earth maps highlight the vulnerability of the border by depicting it as a politically liminal space, which is susceptible to shifting political control. This is particularly striking in the difference between depictions of physical, geographical borders and notional political borders. The borders that are depicted on maps are those – political or not – which are formed by natural geographical features or physical, manmade structures: such as the Lonely Mountain, denoted by its own mountainous walls; the realm of Mordor, clearly separated from Gondor by the Ered Luthui and Ephel Dúath mountains; Gondolin, encased in the valley of Tumladen and the Encircling Mountains; the woods of Lórien plainly

demarcated from the surrounding Drimrill Dale and Field of Celebrant; or the Rammas Echor, depicted on both the Middle-earth map and the map of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor. However, notional political borders that are not fashioned by pre-existing physical formations are notably absent from Middle-earth's maps: their unfixed nature is embodied in their resistance to the fixity of cartographic representation. The Shire is described as having boundaries and borders – made explicit through the Bounders which are said to patrol them[43] – yet these are not marked out on the Middle-earth map, nor are the firm borders between Rohan and Gondor. Doriath in Beleriand, meanwhile, is a realm largely characterised by its border. Doriath itself translates to "Land of the Fence" or "Land of the Girdle" in Sindarin (Tolkien, *Jewels* 370); this derives from the Girdle of Melian, an enchanted border set around the kingdom by its queen that prevents any strangers from entering the land without King Thingol's consent. The girdle is said to encompass and protect the Forests of Neldoreth, Region, the West March of Nivrim, and the neighbouring area of Aelin-Uial; however, on the Beleriand map, there is no suggestion that these areas form part of the same kingdom, and the (albeit invisible) Girdle of Melian is not marked out to indicate Doriath's borders. The maps fail to represent

[43] The term "Bounders" almost certainly stems from the early medieval custom of "beating the bounds", in which members of a parish community would walk the perimeter of the parish so that the younger and newer members could be taught by the elders and church officials where exactly the boundaries lay. The custom is rooted in a pre-cartographical age, where such facts were not communicated through maps, but rather through the oral and ritualistic passing down of knowledge. The Bounders in the Shire mimic such traditions, recalling and reinforcing the relationship between the patrolling of borders and the lack of marked boundaries on cartographic documents.

notional boundaries in Middle-earth, instead only portraying the physical manifestations of political borders.

Rather than through fixed depictions of notional political borders, different territories are broadly marked out on the maps through place names, frequently written in large letters arching over the entire territory, thereby inscribing the politics of the space both onto the map and onto the land. To a certain extent, this is part of the pseudomedieval stylisation of the majority of Middle-earth's cartography: the marking of notional, political borders on the map is largely a product of modernity and the nation-state. However, the lack of fixed borders on the map is also a further indication of the political and invasive activity of Middle-earth, and of the border itself as radically vulnerable. Throughout Tolkien's legendarium, the border is frequently breached, and the act of invasion is achieved. This creates liminal spaces, particularly around borders, which are constantly conquered and occupied by opposing forces, and thus slip easily between political territories. Political borders become characterised by their impermanence: the existence and positioning of the border are destabilised due to the political instability of the land. There are numerous examples of this. Minas Morgul, the fortress that Frodo, Sam and Gollum slip past before climbing the stairs at Cirith Ungol, was once called Minas Ithil and was the twin city to Minas Anor (later Minas Tirith). Established by Isildur and Anarion after the destruction of Númenor, the city was captured by Sauron's forces in S.A. 3429. Shortly afterwards, Isildur recaptured it, and

after Sauron's great defeat at the end of the Second Age, the city was re-established as one of Gondor's key settlements and fortresses. Centuries later, in the Third Age, the city was attacked by the Nazgul and captured once more after several years of siege, before being subsumed into Mordor and renamed Minas Morgul. After Sauron's final defeat in the War of the Ring, the city once more reverted to Gondorian rule, and became part of the fiefdom of Ithilien.

The Lonely Mountain is similarly involved in a back-and-forth struggle over land: the dwarves first settled there in the Third Age, but their accumulated wealth soon attracted the attention of Smaug, who invaded the Lonely Mountain, after which it and the surrounding areas become known as the Desolation of the Dragon. Centuries later, Thorin's Company and Bilbo set out to regain the mountain; after the dragon is slain by Bard, the mountain reverts to the dwarves, although it remains the object of attack several times after: first, by the orcs during the Battle of the Five Armies, later by the Easterlings, and finally by Sauron's forces during the War of the Ring. Meanwhile, the colonising project of the Númenóreans involves numerous invasions of border areas, notably those which border the sea and act as the main frontier to the entirety of Middle-earth. However, the narrative makes explicit the resistance of the native people to these acts of invasion: at times the newcomers "would suffer great loss and be flung back", implying both loss of people and loss of land (Tolkien, *Peoples* 424). The land bordering the sea in Middle-earth is at

this time in a liminal political state, as it is constantly captured and claimed by opposing forces. Although not all of these examples have a corresponding cartographic representation, they all form part of an overarching narrative of the precarity and impermanence of the border, and the concomitant difficulty in representing demarcated territories in a world that is constantly experiencing the flux of invasion and occupation.

Indeed, Middle-earth's near constant state of war and conflict is a key factor in both the establishment and representation of its borders. Throughout Middle-earth's history, the maintenance of fixed boundaries in the face of continuous large and small-scale conquests of land remains a near impossible task. This is particularly true during the First Age, which was the scene of an age-long struggle between Elves and the Three Houses of Men, and Morgoth and his forces, at a time when the topographical and political landscape of Middle-earth was being newly established. Although certain defined and protected borders did exist, such as the Girdle of Melian and the defences around cities such as Gondolin and Nargothrond, the majority of Beleriand was given over to invasions, raids, and skirmishes, to the extent that large areas of land could not be defined by political boundaries or allegiances. This can be seen in the case of Taur-en-Faroth, where Nargothrond was located, which was initially occupied by the Petty-dwarves, then by the Elves, and then by Glaurung the dragon and Morgoth's forces. The constant capture and subjugation of this space means that it never became a defined administrative and cultural unit

with fixed borders; rather, the area it occupied and who was occupying it was constantly being renegotiated through conquest. The Forest of Brethil is another example of this: although it was "claimed as part of his realm by King Thingol" (*Silmarillion* 171), it is in fact not contained in the Girdle of Melian and thus is not within the only fixed border which Doriath has. The People of Haleth are allowed to settle in the Forest, after they were driven from their previous home in Thargelion by orcs, on the condition that they "guard the Crossings of Teiglin against all enemies of the Eldar, and allow no Orcs to enter the woods" (*Silmarillion* 171). This story encapsulates the complexity and transience of borders and the spaces which they define: their territory in Thargelion having been overtaken by orcs, the People of Haleth occupy a new land which is claimed by but not demarcated within the kingdom of Doriath, and thus constitute a new, defensive border for the area through their military presence.

The complexity of the border space is further compounded by the numerous social and civic structures in Middle-earth, particularly in the earlier Ages. Although there are certain clearly defined kingdoms and long-term territories claimed by particular cultural groups, especially as the world develops, there are also numerous tribal societies. Indeed, Middle-earth is initially largely shaped by such groups, such as the various tribes of Men, including the Drúedain, the Easterlings, and the Three Houses of Men; the various migrating tribes of Elves to and from Valinor; the three "breeds" of hobbit – the Harfoots, Stoors, and Fallohides – who dispersed and settled in different areas; or the

roving bands of orcs. The constant movement of these tribes mimics the Völkerwanderung, or Migration Period of the early Middle Ages, a mass movement of various tribes of “barbarians”, including the Anglo-Saxons, Goths, Lombards, Franks, Visigoths and Scots, across Europe over lands previously dominated by the Roman Empire. Similarly, in Middle-earth, this early tribal make-up leads to a sense of political impermanence, as each tribe is constantly in the process of settling regions, being driven out, and invading new ones. As Middle-earth’s society develops, some of these tribal societies become established in particular areas, leading to more defined kingdoms and territories, as is the case with the numerous groups of Elves, who found cities and protected territories such as Gondolin, Nargothrond, Rivendell, Doriath and Lórien; the hobbits, who settle throughout Middle-earth; and the different groups of Men, who establish competing feudal kingdoms. There is nevertheless a continued clash between these societies and the remaining tribes, which maintains the instability of the border space. This precarious social structure – where centuries-old and newly established kingdoms and strongholds exist alongside landless or recently displaced tribes – symbiotically interacts with and indeed facilitates Middle-earth’s constant state of warfare: the numerous conflicts prevent stable political territories from being established and developed, which in turn leads to a lack of defined borders which can deter attacks.

The absence of political borders on the maps therefore works to articulate the difficulty of establishing and maintaining borders within the physical landscape itself. Although certain fast borders are specified in the text, they are nevertheless shown to be vulnerable spaces which can easily be overtaken and overwritten, such as the border between Mordor and Gondor. In other cases, as with many of the small-scale tribal skirmishes in the still-developing First Age of Middle-earth, the territory is so disputed that it does not have time to establish and maintain its borders. The lack of borders on the map both echoes the lack of effective borders in the world itself, and demonstrates the inadequacy of the map as object in accurately conveying all the political and social characteristics of a world caught in constant political turmoil. In this way, the role of the map as political representation mirrors the role of the map as a temporal object, as discussed in the previous chapter: although the maps can speak to these issues, and indeed can often articulate the tension of political or temporal change through marked absences, they nevertheless fail to convey entirely the reality of a world that is continuously on the brink of small or large-scale transformation.

Section VI: Conquest as self-defence

Throughout Middle-earth's history, there are numerous occasions when defensive borders are not enough, and a retaliatory or pre-emptive attack or aggression becomes necessary, either to undo an act of invasion, or to prevent

against future attacks. In this way, actions which are typically considered invasive, imperialist, or domineering, become incorporated into a system of self-defence by vulnerable or conquered territories. Due to the constant disputes over land and winning and losing of territory in Middle-earth, the narrative of conflict and violence as self-defence is a prevalent one, from smaller-scale incidents such as Túrin's killing of the Easterling lord Brodda who had taken over his father's home, to the dwarves' large-scale reclamation of their homeland and the liberating of its surrounding areas from the dragon Smaug. In each instance, the initial loss of the land is framed as an act of unjustifiable aggression, and as an appropriation and exploitation of an already claimed territory. This emphasis on the unjustness of the initial act works to subvert the usual narrative of conquest as aggression in regards to the retaliatory conquest, and frames it instead as an act of self-defence.

The tale of Túrin is a unique take on this model of self-defensive conflict. Rather than a calculated attack or an invading army seeking to claim back their land, Túrin re-enters his homeland by himself in order to restore what is rightfully his. As with much of the tale of Túrin, things do not go to plan, and Túrin murders Brodda in a fit of rage. However, although the ending ethically complicates the straightforward self-defence narrative – as is discussed below – Túrin's initial confrontation with Brodda is nevertheless framed within this model of conflict as defence. This is achieved by highlighting the exploitative fashion in which Brodda seizes Túrin's family goods and lands. The first draft

found in *The Book of Lost Tales II* (1983) emphasises this: while Mavwin, Túrin's mother, had given Brodda guardianship of her lands because she trusted him, he had "mingled her herds and flocks, small as they were, with his mighty ones…[and] the dwelling and stead of Mavwin he suffereth to fall into ruin…" (*Lost Tales II* 89), demonstrating his underhanded and unfit stewardship through his petty seizing of her small flocks and neglectful attitude towards her home. Later drafts, however, frame this as an explicitly invasive act. Brodda is referred to as the "Incomer" or "incoming" and as an Easterling lord (*Shaping* 122, *Jewels* 90), immediately categorising him as an aggressive and unwelcome outsider. His acts of spoliation are also amplified: he is described as having "taken all that was left of [Morwen's] goods" (*Jewels* 88), "taken for his own many of the lands and cattle of Húrin" (*Lost Road* 316), and "plundered" and "despoiled" her home (*Shaping* 30, *Jewels* 88). Túrin's act of violence towards Brodda is thus seen as a direct response to the violence which Brodda inflicted upon his home, and more broadly to the acts of invasion carried out by the Easterlings over Túrin's entire homeland.

Interestingly however, although Túrin's killing of Brodda is depicted as a response to an original act of conquest, the narrative does not respond positively to this attempt at reclamation. The narrator explicitly terms the deed "violent and unlawful" and Airin, Brodda's wife, declares that while Túrin's mother and sister may reclaim their lands, he has forfeited his right to them through his vengeful act (*Lost Tales II* 90). Airin's response to Túrin underlines

two points. Firstly, Túrin's return to his homeland and confrontation with Brodda could have been a valid reclamation of his homeland, given that his mother and sister now have rights to it. Túrin's actions were thus, despite everything that followed, a defence of his lands, and a stand against the Easterling's wider colonial project. Secondly, however, Airin's speech explicates that it was not this initial act of reclamation which was objectionable, but rather the way in which it was carried out. Túrin's attempts to defend and regain control of his homeland instead turn into an act of violent and dishonourable revenge, which invalidates his claim. Túrin's story thus speaks to the violence caused by the constant shifting of territory in Middle-earth, and draws a clear distinction between self-defence of land that turns into vengeance and the desire to regain access and control over your own home.

The dwarves' reclamation of the Lonely Mountain from Smaug is depicted in a much more positive light. Similarly to the tale of Túrin, there is a strong emphasis on the violence and unlawfulness of the initial assault by Smaug. After the dwarves sing their song, Bilbo begins to think of "plundering dragons" (*Hobbit* 21), and Thorin describes how they saw Smaug "settle" on the mountain (*Hobbit* 31), which both denotes his physical landing and also hints at his long-term settlement and occupation of the area. The deliberate violence of Smaug's attack is also highlighted: he ambushes dwarves who are trying to escape, and "route[s]" out the mountain to ensure there are no survivors (*Hobbit* 32). This wanton destruction and cruelty emphasise the illegitimacy of

the act, and work to sanction the dwarves' consequent retaliation on the mountain. In contrast to Smaug's unprovoked and sudden assault, the longstanding connection between the dwarves and the Lonely Mountain is emphasised: Thorin explains that when his people were driven out of the far North, they "came *back*" (emphasis added) to the mountain (*Hobbit* 30), which had been discovered by his far ancestor Thrain the Old, thereby establishing the dwarves' historic claim to the mountain. There is also a clear narrative of reclamation in the song that the dwarves sing at Bag End: they want to "claim" back their gold, and "win [their] harps and gold from him" (*Hobbit* 21), which again reinforces the dwarves' native claim to both the treasure and the land. Thus, rather than an attack on an already occupied territory, the dwarves' attempt to win back the Lonely Mountain is explicitly framed as a defence of their home, and as an act of reclamation.

While the Easterlings' colonisation of Dor-lómin and Túrin's unsuccessful attempt to defend and reclaim his homeland are not represented cartographically on the Beleriand map, Thror's Map plays a key part in the dwarves' reclamation of their homeland in *The Hobbit*. Rather than merely representing the conflict between Smaug and the dwarves – which it does through the inscription of Smaug's violent narrative, as is discussed below – the map is used to actively enable and legitimise the reclamation of land. Not only does the map guide the company to the mountain, but it also gives them a strategy by which to enter the mountain and confront the dragon, through the

instructive runes that help them to locate the secret door. As was discussed in the second chapter, these runes are instrumental in giving the dwarves and Bilbo access: it is only after Bilbo gazes at the map, "pondering over the runes and the message of the moon-letters" (*Hobbit* 261), that the company discovers the secret door and thus sets into motion the events that will eventually remove Smaug from the mountain.[44]

The act of conquest as defence, and in particular as the defence of a territory or political, civic, or social structure associated with that territory is illustrated through the overt politicisation of the dwarves' reclamation of the Lonely Mountain. Although their return to the mountain is largely framed as a homecoming, there is also an obvious power dynamic to it, made explicit through Thorin's reclamation of not only his home but also his kingdom. This is seen when Thorin first arrives into Laketown; he twice declares himself "King under the Mountain" and proclaims, "I return!" (*Hobbit* 248, 250), depicting his return as an explicitly political act. Thror's Map is thus effectively used not only to drive away invaders and thereby to defend a territory and what is left of its people, but also as a device for regaining power over a geographical space. The map gives Thorin knowledge of the landscape, which in turn affords him power over it, which he uses to attempt to ensure his ultimate authority over

[44] Although the dwarves do not technically defeat the dragon themselves, in that it is Bard the Bowman who shoots and kills Smaug, bringing a definitive end to his tyranny over the Lonely Mountain and surrounding areas, the map is nevertheless instrumental in bringing this about. It is by using Thror's Map that the dwarves are able to return to the mountain and, more importantly, locate and sneak in through the side door, all of which begins to remove the mountain from under Smaug's dominion.

the space.[45] The importance of Thror's Map in the power struggle between the dwarves and Smaug over the Lonely Mountain further speaks to Edney and Harley's arguments about how maps reflect the political context in which they were made: Thror's Map, and maps more broadly, can be created, read, and used for political means, and enable the very acts of occupation, conquest, and defence which they then represent.

The politicisation of Thror's Map becomes all the more evident when its purpose is considered. The map helps Thorin and his company make their way back to the Lonely Mountain, gives them a secret route by which to enter the mountain, and facilitates their reclamation of power over the mountain and its lands. However, it is notable that the map is not only being used for this political purpose, but that it was specifically created with this purpose in mind. The map was made by Thror, Thorin's grandfather, who was King under the Mountain when Smaug first arrived, and was passed to Gandalf by his son Thrain –

[45] Of course, Thorin's transition to power after he reaches the mountain is not smooth. As is noted above, Thorin and his company do not physically defeat the dragon themselves, subverting the typical revenge narrative that their conflict with the dragon was hinting at. Moreover, Thorin's authority is undermined numerous times when the men of Lake-town and the Wood Elves lay claim to the treasure; indeed, Bard points out that some of the wealth had previously belonged to the people of Dale, which lessens Thorin's entitlement to it and undermines his attempts to keep hold of it all. However, it is notable that throughout this conflict, there are never any doubts as to who has claim to and authority over the Lonely Mountain and its lands. The people of Esgaroth immediately acknowledge Thorin's kingship, taking up the song which prophecies that the Mountain-king will return. Later on, when Thorin and his company get ready to approach the mountain, the Master of Lake-town bids Thorin to "claim [his] own" (*Hobbit* 255). Although the Master has ulterior motives for encouraging Thorin to reclaim the Lonely Mountain, he nevertheless does recognise Thorin's indisputable claim to the mountain as his proper homeland and kingdom. Thus, even though Thorin's broader authority is at times threatened, his authority over the mountain itself never is. The map is thus indeed instrumental in allowing Thorin to regain his authority and power over his rightful land, although it does not help him beyond that.

Thorin's father – who "wished for his son to read the map and use the key…" (*Hobbit* 34) and thereby reclaim the mountain. The map is therefore not a neutral tool being used politically; rather it articulates and empowers a particular narrative. This is highlighted by the iconographic absence of other territories that were terrorised, destroyed, and oppressed by Smaug, such as the towns of Dale and Esgaroth. While they are marked on the map, and Dale's ruin in particular is emphasised through the past tense of its epithet "here was Girion Lord of Dale", their loss is not visually encoded in the same way as that of the Lonely Mountain and the Desolation of Smaug, and the map could not be used to enable the men of Dale's emancipation from the tyranny of the dragon. This erasure of other political conflicts and the promulgation of a singular narrative focusing on Smaug and the surrounding area reaffirms the political nature of Thror's Map: it is designed and used to help a very particular group regain their authority and power.

The enabling of self-defensive conquest through the use of a map is further demonstrated by the mapping of Mordor by the Last Alliance. Although this differs from the conquest of the Lonely Mountain, in that the Elves and Men are not trying to reclaim their own land, it still forms part of the defensive system of their own territories, by surveying and controlling a historically antagonistic territory which has threatened them in the past. When Frodo and Sam arrive in Mordor, Frodo admits to not being able to read the landscape, explaining "I was shown a map of Mordor that was made before the Enemy

came back…" (*Return* 1212) but that much has changed since, indicating that after the first defeat of Sauron, Elves or Men mapped Mordor and took the map back to Rivendell, where it was used as a source of information about the land. Although Frodo's comment is ostensibly about the impenetrability of Mordor's landscape, it is also indicative of mapping as part of the process of establishing political control over a conquered space. By knowing the land, and by manifesting and concretising this knowledge in an external source, the Elves furthered their political control over the area, so that, in a Foucauldian sense, knowledge of and power over the land become equivalent.

This relationship between knowledge, power, and mapping is emphasised when the mapping of Mordor is read as part of a wider process of surveying, monitoring, and controlling the conquered space. After Sauron's first defeat at the hands of the Elves and Men, Mordor is kept under close watch. The strength of the watch over Mordor is explicitly correlated to the flourishing of Gondor as a political power; in the Appendices, it is described how "Gondor reached the summit of its power" at the same time as "Mordor was desolate, but was watched over by great fortresses that guarded the passes" (*Return* 1368–69). Indeed, it is only when the "watch upon the walls of Mordor slept" and this visual dominance is relaxed that Sauron can regain Mordor and his power (*Fellowship* 318). This emphasis on watching as a means of control both resonates with and subverts Foucault's discussion of the Panopticon, as was discussed in the introduction. The watch over Mordor speaks to the

connection between surveillance and power that is underlined by the model of the Panopticon, yet it also diverges in a crucial way. One of the key tenets of the Panopticon is that constant surveillance is not necessary, as the prisoners would effectively be watching and thereby disciplining themselves. However, in the case of Mordor, as soon as the watch over the land is relaxed, the subject returns to its previous "criminal" state, thereby deviating from the Panopticon model. The watching and mapping of conquered land creates a "state of conscious and permanent visibility" (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 205) only when these acts of monitoring are consistently maintained. The mapping of the area gives the illusion of embodying the Panopticon's objective of perpetual surveillance – through the mapping of the conquered area, the act of monitoring is made concrete and tangible, and can theoretically be sustained by those who are not actively watching the area themselves, thereby creating the sense that Mordor is permanently visible and controllable – yet the return of evil to Mordor demonstrates that this indeed an illusion. Instead, the watchtowers, maps, and other structures of surveillance reverse the model of the Panopticon entirely, so that it is the watcher who is fooled into believing Mordor is constantly visible and controlled. Reading the watch over Mordor through the model of the Panopticon thereby reveals both the power manifested in surveillance and the attempts of the Last Alliance to draw on that, as well as the ways in which the Panopticon's desire for permanent visibility can be easily undermined through inadequate tools.

It is important to note, however, that this desire for power and control on the part of the Elves and Men remains an act of self-defence. Unlike many of the other power struggles over land in Middle-earth's history, the occupation and surveillance of Mordor has no other exterior motivation. Mordor remains desolate and uninhabited during its annexation; there is no utilisation of the land or its resources, no attempts to enslave or exploit its people for economic or personal gain, and no absorption of the land into any of the victor's territories. The control over the land therefore manifests through the power to keep it barren and isolated, rather than through the power to exploit and gain materially. In this way, therefore, the watching over and charting of Mordor aligns with the Panopticon's fundamental purpose, which is to discipline and punish, by depriving Sauron of his lands and therefore of his power. Mapping, however ineffectual, becomes an act of retaliation, and the need to have control over the land becomes a direct response to Mordor's initial aggressive and violent actions.

Section VII: Small scale and individual territorial conquest

These acts of self-defence are undertaken in response to a variety of acts of conquest, from small scale attacks and claims on territory to broader sweeps of imperialism. While the larger scale imperialist invasions cause perceptible and often long-term political changes in Middle-earth's geography, the smaller scale conquests comprise many of the back and forth shifts in the land's

political allegiance, as is discussed above. This section will examine these non-imperialist acts of invasion, that is to say, conquest of land that is not motivated by the building of a singular empire, but rather by individual or tribal conflict.

Smaug's conquest of the Lonely Mountain is emblematic of this form of conquest. The individualism of his act is emphasised: Thorin explains to Bilbo that "[t]here were lots of dragons in the North in those days, and gold was probably getting scarce up there…" (*Hobbit* 31), yet Smaug arrives alone and claims the mountain and its surrounding lands for himself. His conquest of the Lonely Mountain is very clearly not an organised attack in order to perpetuate a particular political agenda or expand the reach of power of a particular people, but is rather driven by purely individual motives of individual greed and self-interest. Moreover, Smaug never seeks to expand his dominion: he is drawn to the wealth amassed in the mountain, and his focus remains on this treasure and the land of the Lonely Mountain itself. Smaug's interest in the treasure is emphasised at numerous points: when Smaug first physically appears in *The Hobbit* he is depicted sleeping on an enormous pile of treasure, which stretches "about him on all sides…across the unseen floors…" (*Hobbit* 273), a visual underscored by Tolkien's own illustration of Smaug which appears in the original edition of *The Hobbit*; because of this constant contact with the treasure, Smaug's underside is encrusted with gold and jewels, reinforcing the connection between him and the mountain's wealth by

subsuming it into his body; and when Smaug guesses that Bilbo came via Lake-town and suspects he was sent by the Lake-Men, he notes that "I haven't been down that way for an age and an age; but I will soon alter that" (*Hobbit* 284).

Smaug's connection with the land of the Lonely Mountain is also emphasised: he is described as "lying there in his stolen hall" (*Hobbit* 274), highlighting his illegitimate possession of the space as well as the treasure; meanwhile, while scouting out the mountain, Balin suggests that Smaug might be outside "keeping watch" (*Hobbit* 260), suggesting a possessive ownership of the land which is in tension with his unsanctioned claims to it and emphasises his constant focus on the mountain. These all work to underline Smaug's inward attention to the mountain and its treasure, rather than to other potential territories and new conquests. Smaug's conquest of the Lonely Mountain is therefore not a stage in his empire-building, but rather a conquest of territory motivated by personal gain. Although economic motivations lie at the heart of most imperialist activity, Smaug's impetus remains purely individualist rather than collectivist, which separates his actions from imperialist acts of spoliation and exploitation.

Smaug's occupation of the Lonely Mountain is reflected in the maps which focus on the narrative of *The Hobbit*, namely Thror's Map and the Wilderland map (fig. 12). In both maps, a drawing of a single dragon is placed prominently

over the mountain, and the surrounding area is labelled “The Desolation of Smaug”, both indicating his presence, while also reinforcing his illegitimate invasion, by portraying him as extraneous to the mountain. The depiction of a singular dragon on both maps also speaks to the individual nature of Smaug’s occupation, and emphasises the direct relationship between him as an individual conqueror, and the area that he has conquered, i.e. the mountain on which he is drawn. The presence of the dragon on Thror’s Map is also commented on by the dwarves: Balin notes that “[t]here is a dragon marked in red on the Mountain…but it will be easy enough to find him without that…” (*Hobbit* 27). Balin’s tongue-in-cheek comment draws attention to the purely political nature of the dragon as cartographic symbol: the marking of a dragon on the map will not provide any navigational aid, but rather exists in order to encode the (new) politics of the land within the map, even if these politics exist on a purely individual and not culturally or politically hegemonic scale. Notably, the dragon was not always present on Thror’s Map: in the original sketch of the map, found in an early manuscript of chapter one, there is no dragon; however, a small dragon appears on a later copy of the map “Copied by B. Baggins”, and on all subsequent sketches and drafts, suggesting that its symbolism was a deliberate and eventually integral part of the map. The same process can be seen in the map of the Wilderland: the original sketch – which admittedly lacks much of the iconographic qualities of the final version – is missing a dragon, but it appears in large-scale on the final version. The inclusion of a dragon symbol thus becomes an integral element in the narrative

of Smaug's occupation, and demonstrates the ability of the map to encode not only big political shifts but also smaller occurrences of land conflict.

This type of smaller scale conflict is seen throughout Tolkien's legendarium. The occupation of the Shire in "The Scouring of the Shire" is a particularly notable example, as it contrasts directly with the larger scale warfare perpetuated by the same offender earlier in the narrative. While Saruman's attacks on Rohan fit into an imperialist narrative, his takeover of the Shire has very different motivations. There is an emphasis on the personal: when the hobbits finally confront Saruman after the Battle of Bywater, he makes explicit his reason for targeting the Shire, declaring "Saruman's home could be all wrecked, and he could be turned out, but no one could touch yours…one ill turn deserves another" (*Return* 1333). He further emphasises his own personal agenda and desire for petty vengeance when he describes the destruction he has caused, and how "it will be pleasant to think of that and set it against my injuries" (*Return* 1333). Although the scale of the occupation of the Shire reaches beyond Saruman, in that numerous other offenders are involved and even perpetuate most of the devastation, both material and human, the confrontation with Saruman – positioned at the end of the chapter, thus coalescing, concluding, and explaining all the episodes of loss and violence caused by the takeover of the Shire – emphasises the individual motivations of the occupation, and highlights how territories and homelands can become pawns within personal narratives of revenge and anger. Saruman's conquest

of the Shire recalls Túrin's reclamation of his homeland, in that both are motivated by revenge, yet while the loss of his land was central to Túrin's anger, in this case the land is merely collateral in Saruman's violent grudge against the hobbits.

The smaller-scale nature of the conquest of the Shire is reflected in its disorganised character. While Saruman's previous attempts to conquer land were defined by their large force of arms and strategic attacks, the occupation of the Shire is depicted as far less insurmountable. The perpetrators are referred to constantly throughout the chapter as "ruffians", hinting at their violent actions while simultaneously underlining their disordered and petty nature. The use of the term "ruffians" also positions them as dichotomous to soldiers in an imperialist army: it suggests individual criminal activity, rather than violence on behalf of a wider goal or ideology. The disordered nature of the occupation is further emphasised when each attempt by members of the new order to bring the four hobbits under control fails spectacularly: Bill Ferny attempts to keep them out of the Shire gates by threatening them, but runs away as soon as he sees their drawn weapons; the Shirriffs – who are admittedly not outsiders or ruffians but who nevertheless conform to the mob rule imposed on the Shire and its residents – attempt to arrest the hobbits but their authority is entirely undermined when Frodo laughs at them, Sam answers them back, and the four "prisoners" proceed at their own pace; and when the hobbits arrive at Bywater, the Men who attempt to stop them flee as

soon as they realise the hobbits are prepared to fight back. The occupation of this land depends entirely on "scaring Breeland peasants and bullying bewildered hobbits" (*Return* 1316), and fails as soon as it meets any kind of resistance, thereby standing in contrast to the more militant and extended campaigns of occupation seen elsewhere in Middle-earth's history.

Nevertheless, despite the ineptitude of its perpetrators, the violence they commit against the Shire is underscored. This violence is enacted both against the land of the Shire and its inhabitants, embodying Said's definition of imperialism as an act of "geographical violence". Said argues that in imperialist conquest, the physical space of the territory is brought under strict control – through exploration, exploitation, and administration – reflecting the way its inhabitants are brought under a new imperialist rule. Said argues that anti-imperialist resistance must start with an emancipation of the geographical which has been submitted to such violence ('Yeats and Decolonization' 77). The occupation of the Shire is not an act of imperialism – as demonstrated above, it lacks all the structural and ideological hallmarks of imperial control and warfare – yet the parallels it creates between violence against people and violence against the land fit into Said's model, and demonstrate that the concept of "geographical violence" also applies to these smaller-scale, non-imperialist conquests and invasions.

The parallels between human and geographical violence are clearly drawn throughout “The Scouring of the Shire”. As Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin delve deeper into the occupied Shire, they discover both types of damage almost simultaneously. The Shirrifs threaten the four hobbits with the Lockholes, prison cells which are alluded to multiple times throughout the chapter, and which act as a gross subversion of the domestic and comfortable hobbit holes that are most associated with the Shire. There are also several references to more explicit violence: Robin explains that the chief’s men no longer stop at imprisonment and “often they beat” the prisoners (*Return* 1312), and Men jeer at the hobbits to return to their homes “before you’re whipped” (*Return* 1322), making explicit the connection between violence and control. This human violence is interlaced with geographical violence: Frodo and Sam’s first encounter with the Bywater results in their “first really painful shock”: houses have been burned down, gardens are “rank with weeds”, and ugly new houses and an industrial chimney have replaced areas of natural beauty (*Return* 1314). There is also a particular emphasis on environmental damage with the felling of the trees, the chimney “pouring out black smoke”, and the pouring of “filth a purpose” polluting the Shire’s water (*Return* 1314, 1326). This emphasis serves to reinforce the idea of “geographical violence” associated with violent occupation by demonstrating how the violence not only manifests through acts of control such as surveillance, physical brutality, or administration, but through active destruction that harms the very material nature of the geographical region in question.

The connection between these different types of violence is further encapsulated in a speech by Farmer Cotton:

> All the ruffians do what he says; and what he says is mostly: hack, burn, and ruin; and now it's come to killing. There's no longer even any bad sense in it. They cut down the trees and let 'em lie, they burn houses and build no more. (*Return* 1325)

Farmer Cotton's lament that it has now come to killing logically refers to the conversations about murdered hobbits that have occurred in the last two chapters, both between Mr Butterbur and Gandalf, and between the hobbits since they returned to the Shire. However, in this speech, Farmer Cotton immediately after comments on the needless nature of the killing, and then ends his argument by bringing up the trees, and how they are unnecessarily cut down. Within this speech, the trees become an example of the gratuitous killing to which Cotton was referring, thereby equating the violence done to the land with that done to the hobbits and demonstrating how they both bear the consequences of occupation.

The killing which occurs throughout the Shire, both human and environmental, speaks to a sense of inversion fostered by the violent occupation. In the case of the murders, it is made explicit how unnatural an occurrence this is: when Mr Butterbur first introduces the topic to the narrative, he exclaims, "there were some folk killed, killed dead! If you'll believe me" (*Return* 1299). The repetition of "killed", the tautology of "killed dead", and his explicit acknowledgement that

this is hard to believe all emphasise his incredulity at the event and highlight how it is a subversion of the Shire's peaceful norm. Frodo later builds on the rareness of murder in the Shire, explaining that "[n]o hobbit has ever killed another on purpose…nobody is to be killed at all, if it can be helped…" (*Return* 1317). There is a similar sense of inversion within the environment: as discussed above, the felling of trees and the building of industry entirely undermine the Shire's original emphasis on nature and harmony. The image of the party tree perhaps best encapsulates this. The tree acts as a key setting at the start of *The Lord of the Rings*; it is where Bilbo's party is held, and it symbolises the peace and community of the Shire. When the hobbits return to the Shire, however, it has been cut down and is lying "lopped and dead" (*Return* 1330), contrasting with its central presence at the beginning of the narrative.

This concept of inversion provides a useful lens through which to consider how the occupation of the Shire intersects with cartography. There is no map of the Shire post-occupation or post-Scouring; indeed, the only drawing that Tolkien made of this point in the story was a floor plan and sketch of Father Cotton's house (Hammond and Scull, *Art of Lord of the Rings* 197). However, "A Part of the Shire" (fig. 2), drawn to illustrate the area before the events of *The Lord of the Rings* transpired, speaks to the sense of inversion which the occupation of the Shire brings about. As discussed in previous chapters, the map of the Shire in *The Fellowship of the Ring* depicts a domesticated landscape that is

administratively controlled and well-ordered. This is a reading advanced by Stefan Ekman, who argues that the main elements of the Shire map – topography of vegetation and water courses, road systems, population centres, and administrative regions – are "part of an overarching discourse of defining, situating, and familiarising the Shire" (*Here Be Dragons* 49). This characteristic echoes the depiction of the Shire at the beginning of the narrative, as a place of order and peace. Furthermore, the well-ordered map acts as a way of demonstrating affinity, belonging, and symbiotic ownership of the Shire. This is seen in other examples of how hobbits interact with maps, such as Bilbo's map of the Country Round or Frodo's maps which only show white spaces beyond the Shire borders: maps become a way of depicting, instilling, and reinforcing order and familiarity.

However, the occupation of the Shire inverts the Shire's sense of order, and thereby inverts the order and knowledge that the map symbolises. Ekman disagrees with this, arguing that the lack of detail on the Shire map means that the violence of the occupation does not create any cartographic tension – the cut-down trees never featured on the map anyway – so that the map exists in the "constant present" (*Here Be Dragons* 51). However, I argue that even if the map itself is still topographically accurate, that which the map culturally symbolises has changed. The occupation of the Shire overturns the certainty and familiarity which the map originally promised, and turns the Shire into a burnt and maimed shadow of its former self. This undermining of the map's

original purpose, and those of Shire maps more generally, reinforces the violence done to the land and also emphasises the Shire inhabitants' loss of home and sense of belonging. By removing the hobbits' sense of control over their homeland, represented in the redundancy of the map, Tolkien makes explicit the traumatic break between the inhabitants and their land, and how their home was temporarily wrested from them.

An alternative, and more tragic, narrative of loss of home is seen in the history of the Wild Men of the Woods, or the Drúedain. Modelled on the medieval character of the "Wild Man", an "archetypal outsider" (Flieger, 'Tolkien's Wild Men' 95) who exists on the boundaries of the civilised world, the Drúedain nevertheless eschew many of the typical attributes of the medieval Wild Man: they are capable of speech and thought, and align themselves with the side of "good" in the battle between the Free Peoples of Middle-earth and Sauron, despite their misuse at the hands of the Men of Númenor and Rohan through the years. Tolkien uses his rendition of the Wild Men to create a more sympathetic depiction of the figure of the social outcast, and to call to attention the misuses of power that inevitably occur when a social group is marginalised, deemed "uncivilised", and conquered by more powerful forces.

The numerous similarities between the Drúedain and hobbits only serve to emphasise the former's more negative path through a very comparable narrative. Like hobbits, the Drúedain are described as a diminutive race that

are largely unknown and ignored in the wider history of Middle-earth. However, unlike the Drúedain, hobbits are firmly established and secure in their homeland, and are allowed to live freely and prosper until the events in *The Lord of the Rings*. As discussed above, their attachment to their land is signified through the mapping of it, and even when their land is invaded by hostile forces, they nevertheless succeed in winning it back, in one of the final acts of battle and heroism in the narrative. Their liberation of the Shire thus speaks to Said's argument that the first step in anti-imperialist (or in this case, anti-invasive) resistance is the emancipation of the geographical. The Drúedain, meanwhile, suffer the same predicament as the hobbits in "The Scouring of the Shire", yet their fate is very different. It is described how even when they first arrive in Middle-earth and settle in the White Mountains, they are "suspicious of other kinds of Men by whom they had been harried and persecuted as long as they could remember…" (*Unfinished Tales* 383). This persecution does not end in the establishing of their homeland: they are driven out by tall Men from the East, and then again by the Númenórean invasions, and again by the Men from Gondor and the Rohirrim, so that eventually only a small fraction of them remains. This colonialism remains distinct from the imperialism which is enacted elsewhere Tolkien's legendarium: the Drúedain were not driven out in pursuit of empire building, but they were displaced and the lands on which they lived were settled and colonised by new inhabitants. Moreover, in his description of the Drúedain's displacement, Tolkien uses an iteration of the word "survivor" three times in as many sentences, drawing

attention not only to the remaining Wild Men but also implicitly to all those who have been killed. As with the hobbits, there are clear parallels drawn between the human violence and the geographical violence enacted upon the Drúedain and their land, yet unlike the hobbits, they do not succeed in resisting or emancipating themselves from this oppression.

The erasing of the Wild Men from their homes, and indeed from Middle-earth itself, is mirrored in their cartographic representation, or lack thereof. There is no indication of the settlement of Drúedain who live in the White Mountains on the Middle-earth map that appeared in the initial publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, nor of the enclave who live north of Anfallas in a land called Drúwaith Iaur, which literally translates to Old Pukel Land.[46] There are moreover no individual maps dedicated to these specific regions. The lack of cartography speaks to how the Drúedain's homeland was continually shifting due to their displacement, and also emphasises how their existence has been historically unvalued and thus undocumented. Moreover, in addition to the key Drúedain settlements of the Third Age not being marked on the Middle-earth map, the areas in which they are located are subsumed within the broader kingdoms of Rohan and Gondor, as represented by the arching letters labelling and claiming the land, cartographically reflecting how the land of the Drúedain was

[46] Drúwaith Iaur is added in the revision of the map made by Christopher Tolkien entitled "The West of Middle-earth at the End of the Third Age" (fig. 10). The Drúadan forest is also depicted in the more topographically accurate map of Rohan, Gondor, and Mordor; however, I would argue that the absence of both the forest and Drúwaith Iaur from the original Middle-earth map intended to give a comprehensive representation of the entirety of Middle-earth is significant.

continually taken over by more powerful tribes and kingdoms. The systemic erasure of the Drúedain also illustrates how maps function as tools of power. Harley discusses the "silences" that need to be examined when deconstructing a map ('Deconstructing' 153): in this case, the "silence" or absence of the Drúedain works to articulate the systems of power that generate historic and political discourse in Middle-earth. The map, and by extension the map maker, create and thereby control the narrative, so that the Drúedain, who are considered an inferior race by those who control cartographic production, are erased from both the map and the land.

There are moreover other intersections of power at play in the story of the Drúedain, which impact their lack of cartographic representation. Throughout the chapters focusing on the Drúedain in both *The Lord of the Rings* and *Unfinished Tales*, the Drúedain are highly racialized. Their physical features are emphasised and explicitly othered: Merry's first impression of Ghân-Buri-Ghân, the headsman of the tribe, is of a "strange squat shape…short-legged and fat-armed, thick and stumpy, and clad only with grass around his waist" (*Return* 1088), while in *Unfinished Tales*, they are described as "unlovely", with "wide faces…deep-set eyes with heavy brows, and flat noses" (*Unfinished Tales* 377). The description in *Unfinished Tales* particularly makes clear the racialisation at work: it is not intended to be a portrayal of an individual character, but rather an anthropological account of an entire tribe. The racialisation is moreover overtly negative, both in the unflattering imagery used

and in the description of the grass skirt that connotes a primitive society. This primitiveness is further emphasised in the speech of Ghân-Buri-Ghân, which Flieger describes as akin to a "Hollywood Tarzan" ('Tolkien's Wild Men' 100). These descriptions have much in common with racist portrayals of non-white people in nineteenth-century imperialist literature that similarly use unattractive physical descriptors in order to create a racial hierarchy: in *King Solomon's Mines*, H. Rider Haggard describes the King of Kukuanaland with "lips…as thick as a Negro's" and a "flat" nose (141); the villain of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of the Four* (1890) comes from the Indian Andaman Islands, whose inhabitants are described as "naturally hideous, having large, misshapen heads, small fierce eyes and distorted features" (*Selected Stories* 144); in "The Adventure of the Three Gables" (1927), a former black slave visits Sherlock Holmes, who stares at "the visitor's hideous mouth" (*Case-Book* 86); and in *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821), Thomas de Quincey encounters a Chinese man with "sallow and bilious skin…small, fierce, restless eyes…[and]…thin lips" who later haunts his opium-induced dreams (203).

The characterisation of the Drúedain in such similar terms undoubtedly draws from this tradition of physical othering that was so prevalent in nineteenth-century literature, and certainly owes much to the problematic racialisation and racial hierarchy otherwise at work throughout all of Tolkien's legendarium. Notably, however, Tolkien's depiction of the situation of the Drúedain as a displaced people is largely sympathetic, which contrasts heavily with the

insensitive and indifferent portrayal of non-white races in the texts above; his use of this framework and language could therefore be intended as a tool for considering intersections of power between dominant and historically marginalised races, by using the same imagery and vocabulary to describe the Drúedain as was used for non-Caucasian races in popular imperialist literature. This reading does not erase the racism which underlies Tolkien's legendarium, however. Setting aside the whiteness of the protagonists due to the text's Eurocentric focus, it is undeniable that numerous malevolent characters are strongly racialized even outside of colonial or imperial activity: the Easterlings are described as "dark" and "swarthy" throughout, and critics such as Margaret Sinex have drawn attention to their similarities to Middle Eastern and specifically Saracen men; the parallels between the two drawing on the racialisation and marginalisation of Saracens in the medieval Christian imaginary. The Orcs too are described in racist terms; in a 1958 letter to Forrest J Ackerman, Tolkien explains that the physical features of the Orcs was taken from "degraded and repulsive version of the (to Europeans) least lovely Mongol types" (*Letters* 274). Tolkien's parenthesis demonstrates his awareness of white European racial bias, yet his decision to take advantage of and thereby perpetuate rather than challenge this bias is undeniably problematic and troubling.

In a similar way, then, Tolkien's racialized depiction of the Drúedain, while sympathetic, retains its racist undertones, and thus, I would argue, cannot be

interpreted as a purely radical anti-racist challenge. In this way, I align myself with Elizabeth Massa Hoiem, who argues that Tolkien offers a "sophisticated criticism" of colonialism while nevertheless "making use of the colonial rhetoric that saturated the literature of [his] time" (76). Tolkien's imagery and language remains rooted in contemporary racial power dynamics even as it attempts to confront them, drawing attention to the intersections between racism and colonisation without fully subverting the cultural frameworks that uphold them. This reading is supported by Dimitra Fimi, who argues that the characterisation of the Drúedain is very similar to "the eighteenth-century romantic idealisation of the 'noble savage': a primitive man who is free, peaceful, and close to nature" (*Tolkien, Race and Cultural History* 150). Fimi's comparison between the Drúedain and the noble savage calls to mind the native and indigenous tribes to whom the concept of the "noble savage" typically referred, and thus draws attention to the parallels between this racialisation and the colonisation of land that both the actual and Tolkien's fictional native peoples suffered. Although there is no explicit connection drawn between the racialisation of the Drúedain and the violence and displacement that they suffer, it is hinted at in various places: the Drúedain are "harried and persecuted" by other kinds of Men, and the Men of Rohan do not recognise the Drúedain's "humanity" but instead "hunt them like beasts", a comparison that echoes primitive racial characterisations (*Return* 1090, *Unfinished Tales* 384).

The ways in which the Drúedain are depicted as racially inferior, and the ways in which this hierarchy is implemented to both deprive and historically erase them from their lands through their cartographic absence thus have their parallels in narratives of settler-colonialism. This mirroring demonstrates how manifestations of power which define the conquest and subsequent mapping of land can also intersect with other power dynamics, such as racial ones. This speaks to what critics such as Barbara Bush have argued: dichotomies are culturally created – such as those between different races, or civilised/uncivilised groups – in order both to justify the conquest of land and to create a power binary that will enable it. (24) Tolkien's portrayal of the Drúedain criticises colonialism and the tools that permit and perpetuate it, both in the sympathy created for the Drúedain, and in depicting them as the true native inhabitants of the land. This is epitomised in the Drúedain's guiding of the Rohirrim to the Battle of the Pelennor fields. As Ghân-Buri-Ghân explains, the wain-road through the Drúadan Forest has been largely abandoned and forgotten by the men of Rohan and Gondor, "but not by Wild Men" (*Return* 1089). As Ekman argues, this episode demonstrates the Drúedain's more authentic relationship with the land: "they have lived in this area longer than the people of both Gondor and Rohan…who are now its masters" and they have maintained their knowledge and care of the land, unlike the "High Men" who have forgotten it in favour of their "Stone-houses" (*Here Be Dragons* 136–37). Despite the Drúedain's lack of maps and cartographic representation, they nevertheless display an almost cartographic knowledge of the land that

suggests a deep, almost primal connection with it, and acts as an implicit critique of the colonialism that does not recognise or value this connection.

Section VIII: Imperialism

Tolkien's implicit denunciation of colonialism in the tale of the Drúedain prefigures his more explicit criticism of imperialism throughout his legendarium. Tolkien's personal attitudes to imperialism and particularly British imperialism are well documented. In a letter to Christopher in 1943, Tolkien laments the globalisation of American and British culture and voices his concerns that a victory for the Allies at the end of World War II would not necessarily be an improvement, before defending himself against letter censors by affirming his patriotism: "I love England (not Great Britain and certainly not the British Commonwealth (gr!))" (*Letters* 65). In a later 1945 letter, Tolkien again worries about the implications of the end of the war and the weapons – such as Christopher's R.A.F. planes – that are used to bring it about, explaining, "I know nothing about British or American imperialism in the Far East that does not fill me with regret and disgust…" (*Letters* 115). Moreover, Tolkien's lack of enthusiasm was not only reserved for the twentieth-century British and American empires; in a 1944 letter, he adds that "I should have hated the Roman Empire in its day (as I do)", elaborating that he would have been unable to hate the Gauls and Carthagians out of pure patriotic allegiance (*Letters* 89). From these personal comments, his principal

objections to imperialism become clear: the violence, prejudice, and cultural hegemony that empires create make them, in Tolkien's eyes, untenable.

The key imperialist movements in Middle-earth exhibit these same negative characteristics, thereby functioning as a critique of the imperialist project at large. There are two of these movements in Middle-earth's history: those of the Númenóreans, and of Sauron and Saruman, defined by their attempts to use military force to gain land and build a geographical empire, while also exhibiting the overlap of human and geographical violence that has been theorised by Said, and DeLoughrey et al through the exploitation of natural resources and the subjugation of native inhabitants of conquered lands, as will be discussed. The key distinction between the two is their method of empire-building; while the Númenórean invasions and colonisations of Middle-earth are reminiscent of examples of Western imperialism post-Columbus, taking place over sea and journeying to conquer "unknown" lands, Sauron and Saruman build military empires over land, invading and occupying known and certainly inhabited territories. Yet, although the two practices are based on different historical models, it becomes swiftly apparent that the concept of the "unknown" that the Columbus sea voyages and the Númenórean invasions are predicated on is in fact a construction of the imperialist imagination.

This construction of the unknown was a key part of the imperialist project. Bush points to the conceptualisation of the Americas, the Pacific Islands, and other

sites of European colonisation as “terra nullius” – or virgin territory – as an important justification of the imperialist project: “the world unknown to the Europeans was there to be conquered” (14), so that the unknown became synonymous with being empty, uninhabited, and available. This emphasis on discovering the unknown had its equivalencies in cartography: Harley comments on how “[i]nsofar as maps were used in colonial promotion, and lands claimed on paper before they were effectively occupied, maps anticipated empire” (‘Power’ 282), so that mapping became a physical manifestation of the act of familiarising unknown, blank areas. Harley further draws on D. W. Meinig’s analysis of the partitioning of North America, who argues that the “very lines on the map exhibited this imperial power and process because they had been imposed on the continent with little reference to indigenous peoples, and indeed in many places with little reference to the land itself” (qtd. in Harley 282), a practice that underscores the construction of conquered land as effectively blank because it was hitherto unknown. Imperialist mapping was further concerned with filling in these “vacant” spaces in the imagination as well as on the map. In one of the most famous discussions of imperialism and mapping in literature, found in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899), the narrator Marlow describes the “blank spaces” on maps which would draw him in as a child, and how, as the world became explored and colonised, they “ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery—a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over…” (12). For Marlow, and for the European imperialist project at large, the unknown parts of the

world were culturally and imaginatively rendered blank, in order to enable colonial appropriation and filling in.

In Tolkien's legendarium, however, the blank spaces on maps are treated very differently; Tolkien undermines this European and Conradian model by demonstrating how even if the land is unknown to the conquerors, it is already populated, known, and often already mapped. When Frodo slips the ring on after escaping from a desperate Boromir, the whole of Middle-earth comes into his view, including "wide uncharted lands, nameless plains, and forests unexplored" to the east (*Fellowship* 522). However, while the east is largely uncharted, it is never the site of imperialist invasion; indeed, it is from here that armies come to invade the meticulously charted west. In another instance, Frodo looks through maps of the Shire and "wondered what lay beyond their edges", noting that they "showed mostly white space beyond its borders" (*Fellowship* 57). Rather than an incentive to exploration and expansion, however, this characteristic of hobbit cartography is depicted as an example of the Shire's parochial myopia; there is never any move on the part of the Shire to investigate and settle these blank spaces. In Middle-earth, therefore, the concept of *terra nullius* does not justify imperialism as it does in *Heart of Darkness*. That is not to say that the concept of the "unknown" does not motivate empire building: in his commentary on the Númenórean raids, Christopher explains that Númenor began to be seen by its inhabitants as "over-populous, boring, 'overknown'…and this cause of discontent is used, it

seems, by Sauron to further the policy of 'imperial' expansion and ambition that he presses on the king…" (*Lost Road* 77). Yet, vitally, Tolkien undermines this mythic conceptualisation of unknown, blank land by stressing how everywhere is known and charted from at least one perspective.

Rather than a filling in of blank areas, imperialist mapping in Middle-earth is instead emphasised as a process of rewriting. The borders and the liminal spaces surrounding them are written over by the imperialist act, both figuratively and literally: on the Middle-earth map, the previously Gondorian city of Minis Ithil has been rewritten as Minas Morgul to reflect its conquest by the forces of Mordor and thus the enormous physical and political changes that the city has undergone. The map acts, if not as a literal palimpsest, then as a figurative one; in areas such as Carn Dûm, where it specifies "[h]ere was of old the Witch-realm of Angmar", the land's previous political allegiance still peeks through. This serves as a counter to the depiction of the colonised space as seen in *Heart of Darkness*: through showing colonised spaces as previously mapped and known, Middle-earth's cartography demonstrates that there are no "blank spaces" on the map; instead, imperialism is categorically depicted as an act of dominance and erasure.

Similarly, Sauron and Saruman's empire is discussed throughout *The Lord of the Rings* as a writing over or covering of previous lands, territories, and peoples. When Gandalf first tells Frodo about Sauron's ambitions to regain the

Ring, he warns him that Sauron will "cover all the lands in a second darkness" (*Fellowship* 67); later at Rivendell he reminds Pippin that the true Lord of the Ring is "the master of the Dark Tower of Mordor, whose power is again stretching out over the world…" (*Fellowship* 294); Glóin tells the Council of Elrond that "the Shadow grows and draws nearer" (*Fellowship* 314); when Gandalf is imprisoned at Isengard, he notices that "whereas it had once been green and fair, it was now filled with pits and forges…Overall his works a dark smoke hung and wrapped itself about the sides of Orthanc…" (*Fellowship* 339); and later Treebeard emphasises this point, telling Merry and Pippin that "down on the borders they are felling trees – good trees…most are hewn up and carried off to feed the fires of Orthanc. There is always a smoke rising from Isengard these days…" (*Towers* 617). Throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, imagery of smoke, shadow, and darkness is used to visually reinforce the ways in which Sauron and Saruman's empire building seeks to write over Middle-earth as it is. Although these displays of dominance over the land do not yet have chartable effects, they do foreshadow the ways in which imperialist activity imposes over the land; the culmination of this is then seen in those areas that have been entirely and successfully overtaken and occupied, such as Minas Ithil.

The conceptualisation of imperialism as an act of erasure and writing over is also embodied in the story of Tal-Elmar, a short tale detailing the establishment of Númenórean dominions in Middle-earth from the perspective of the Middle-

earth inhabitants who are already established in these areas. As discussed in the second chapter, there are no explicit maps of the Númenórean empire; this at first seems to contradict Edney's examination of the relationship between imperialism and cartography, where he asserts "[t]he maps came to define the empire itself, to give it territorial integrity and its basic existence. The empire exists because it can be mapped; the meaning of empire is inscribed into each map" (2). However, there are several points that demonstrate how the story of Tal-Elmar and that of the Númenórean empire more broadly can be read as an intersection of imperialist and cartographic concerns: the "Description of the Island of Númenor" explains that there existed many maps in the Númenórean archive as "many natural histories and geographies were composed by learned Men in Númenor…" (*Unfinished Tales* 165), which suggests a culture of mapping the island and the broader empire, even if none are provided paratextually; there are also maps, namely the maps of Beleriand, Númenor (fig. 14), and Middle-earth, that when considered together represent the profound effects of the empire; as discussed in the second chapter, moreover, there exist practises of non-textual, cognitive cartography by the Númenóreans that suggest this same culture of erasure. The story of Tar-Elmar thus is able to speak to this characteristic of imperialism that Tolkien highlights throughout. The narrative positionality of the story is key: it is told entirely from the perspective of the colonised people, thereby reversing the typical privileging of the Númenórean context throughout Tolkien's legendarium. This shift in viewpoint enables a consideration of these

conquests of land as acts of explicit and unjustifiable colonial violence. The lands in this tale are from the start established as vulnerable to colonising attacks: “hateful and proud” Men from the East come with “bright weapons…thrusting towards the Shores of the Sea, driving before them the ancient dwellers of these lands…” (*Peoples* 424). These attacks are central to the tale, as Tal-Elmar the protagonist is descended from both these Men and the native people of the land, and his liminal subject position as both outsider and native inhabitant is the principal narrative perspective. Not long into the story, however, it becomes clear that this is not the only experience of violence that these lands and their people have undergone; Tal-Elmar’s father Hazad spies ships on the horizon and fearfully explains that while the Men from the East are indeed to be feared, the ships herald the arrival of the Númenóreans, who have become legendary for their violent settlement of the lands. These conquests are specifically imperialist in nature, forming part of a wider occupation of Middle-earth’s lands by the Númenóreans that is depicted throughout the legendarium. The Tal-Elmar tale demonstrates the ugly realities of this empire building through its characterisation of the Númenóreans, who are consistently framed through violence: they are described as worshippers of Death who “slay men cruelly in honour of the Dark” (*Peoples* 427); when Tal-Elmar comes close to them he is frightened, as “the tales of the ‘blades’ of the Cruel Men were familiar to his childhood” (*Peoples* 433); he is surrounded by “armed men” (*Peoples* 435); and the Númenóreans bid the native inhabitants to leave “or be slain” (*Peoples* 437).

Moreover, when the Númenóreans first land, they set up lookouts over the land immediately; Tal-Elmar sees them "on watch; every now and then he caught a flash as some weapons or arms moved in the sun" (*Peoples* 435). This mirrors the power dynamics of the guard over Mordor, yet the purpose of the watching – as a means to conquer rather than defend – lends not only power but violence to the act, so that watching becomes implicitly connected with weaponry and the threat of imperialist violence.

As in Fanon and Said's theorisation of imperialism, the relationship between desire for land and human violence is also made explicit. The narrator baldly states that "[t]he object of the Númenóreans is to occupy this land, and in alliance with the 'Cruels' of the North to drive out the Dark People" (*Peoples* 436), while further on the Númenóreans tell Tal-Elmar, "[y]our time of dwelling in these hills is come to an end. Here the men of the West have resolved to make their homes, and the folk of the dark must depart - or be slain…" (*Peoples* 437), demonstrating the multiplicity of the types of violence that occur, both through the physical manifestation of the Númenóreans' weapons and their slaying of the native peoples, and through the taking of the Middle-earth peoples' home and lands. The unique narrative perspective – told through the eyes of those experiencing the effects of Númenórean imperialism, rather than the typical Númenórean angle – allows the act of imperialism to be mediated through the victims' affective response, rather than acting as simple narrative recounting. When Hazad first glimpses the ships he is "troubled", and

speaks of the “dread” and “shadow of fear” that the Númenórean invasions bring to the native inhabitants (*Peoples* 426, 427). Later when Tal-Elmar is forced to spy out the landings, he is “shaken with fear”, “trembled”, is “afraid”, “quailed”, and feels “terror” throughout his encounter with the invaders (*Peoples* 433, 434, 436). This emphasis on fear entrenches the Númenóreans’ imperialist project in the harmful effects it has upon the people being deprived of their land, rather than in the “adventure” of empire building. It also reinforces the notion of imperialism as an act of erasure by highlighting the humanity and subjectivity of the native peoples, and demonstrating how imperialism and occupation neglect this complexity in order to write over both their physical presence and their narratives. This erasure is then carried through the cartography of these areas, specifically through the transition from the Beleriand map to the Middle-earth map. As was argued in the previous chapter, the fundamental geological changes that altered the structure of the Earth in the Second Age and thus the maps that represented these areas were due to the actions of the Númenóreans and their greed for immortality and power. The lands that the native peoples occupy become entirely obliterated both from the world and from the map due to the Númenóreans’ desire for ultimate power.

The Tal-Elmar tale also crucially demonstrates the intersection between imperialism and other discourses of power. The story explicitly tackles race, although like the history of the Drúedain and other interventions that Tolkien

makes into race, his consideration of these power dynamics and in particular the language he uses to illustrate them is not unproblematic. The Númenóreans and the tribes of Men from the East are white and the colonised people are dark-skinned. As Hoiem argues in her discussion of the Númenórean tale of Aldarion and Erendis, and as has been previously mentioned here, Tolkien uses racialized language and white, Eurocentric conceptualisations of civilisation in his engagement with race. Tal-Elmar's grandmother Elmar comes from the white Men of the East, and is captured after a battle and married to Buldar, Tal-Elmar's grandfather. When describing Tal-Elmar's family who take after his grandfather's side – that is to say, the native peoples of the land – Tolkien describes them as "broad, swarthy, short, tough, harsh-tongued, heavy-handed, and quick to violence" (*Peoples* 423). Much like the Drúedain, their physical appearance negatively contrasts with the tallness, whiteness, and concomitant elegance of white Men and Elves; these "inferior" physical attributes then turn quickly into negative personal characterisations that align with racialized assumptions made about "uncivilised" or "primitive" peoples, namely, that they lack rationality, communication, and the capacity for peace. This is made explicit later by Tal-Elmar himself before he confronts the Númenórean invaders, where he recognises their kinship despite being "born and bred in a decaying, half-savage people" (*Peoples* 434). Here, although the perspective rests with Tal-Elmar, it is the narrative voice itself making this claim, demonstrating how these racist frameworks are undeniably embedded within Tolkien's

storytelling. Moreover, while there is a brief consideration of the gendered violence of colonialism, in that a woman is kidnapped and forced to marry, this is complicated by the fact that it is one of the Númenórean women and a native man, thereby perpetuating problematic narratives about white women and men of colour.

The tale of Tal-Elmar therefore cannot be read as a complete rejection of the white supremacist ideologies that have historically enabled Western imperialism, and I argue that to do so would be to carelessly disregard the ways in which racist language and systemic prejudice create, maintain, and execute harmful power dynamics. Yet, although Tolkien does uphold – as Hoiem terms it – the "colonial rhetoric" of his time (76), the tale of Tal-Elmar does nevertheless engage with the ways in which the very frameworks that Tolkien writes within contribute to the imperialist project that he is critiquing. In a confrontation between Elmar and Buldar, Elmar laments being held captive among a people that she terms "base and unlovely" (*Peoples* 425). Buldar responds: "Base and unlovely thou namest us. Truly, maybe. Yet true is it also that thy folk are cruel, and lawless, and the friends of demons. Thieves are they. For our lands are ours from of old, which they would wrest from us with their bitter blades. White skins and bright eyes are no warrant for such deeds…" (*Peoples* 425). Buldar gets to the very heart of how racism informs imperialism, demonstrating how racial purity or supremacy is used as a "warrant" or justification for invading and occupying land. Huggan and Tiffin's

conceptualisation of environmental racism is useful here: the particular ways in which Tal-Elmar's people are racialized, as primitive and animalistic, mimics the way the natural world is characterised as wild and uncontrolled; indeed, in the Tal-Elmar tale, the Númenóreans' disdain for the native peoples aligns with their summation of the land as "accursed" and "dark" (*Peoples* 435), recalling the famous rendering of Africa as uncivilised and abject in *Heart of Darkness*. Tolkien demonstrates an awareness of the ways in which imperialism establishes and employs racial ideologies to justify its occupation of land, and while his rhetoric remains emblematic of the same structures he seeks to critique, his use of narrative perspective and his explicit undermining of these ideologies seeks to deconstruct the ways in which power is deployed over people and their land.

Huggan and Tiffin's comments on the symbiotic relationship between oppression of people and oppression of land illuminates the ways in which the Númenórean empire endangers both. Not only are the native people racialized in such a way as to deprive them violently of their land, but the land too is simultaneously rendered inferior and dispensable. This has been discussed at length in the second chapter, but it is worth revisiting briefly here to consider the explicit connections between imperial violence and environmental damage. When the Númenóreans first begin establishing ports at Lond Daer, the native inhabitants only become hostile when the deforestation becomes "devastating" (*Unfinished Tales* 263), demonstrating the intrinsic, emotional

bond between them and their homeland. In response, the Númenóreans become "ruthless" (*Unfinished Tales* 262), treating the native inhabitants as their enemies and felling the trees with no thought of husbandry or replanting. There is a disturbing causality here between the Númenóreans' hostility to the people of Lond Daer and their subsequent treatment of the environment: the land becomes caught up in human struggles, and is damaged in order to provoke or injure the humans who live on it. The interdependence between human and environment, and how one is used to hurt the other, is emblematic of Said's theorisation of mutually inclusive geographical violence, and speaks to the entangled ways in which both land and inhabitants are made victims of imperialism.

Although Tolkien focuses on the ways in which the natural and human worlds are enmeshed in imperialist violence, he also takes care to focus on what DeLoughrey and Handley term the "biophysical" effects of colonialism and imperialism, which include pollution, deforestation, desertification, and other tangible impacts outside of anthropocentric concerns. Hynes traces the increasing entanglement of imperialism and deforestation and environmental damage through successive drafts of the Númenor tale. In the earliest version of the story, "The Fall of Númenor", Númenor only seeks to invade and master the immortal lands of Valinor; Hynes notes that the Númenóreans "tarried not long yet in Middle-earth, for their hearts hungered ever westward for the undying bliss of Valinor…" (qtd. in Hynes, 'Empire, Deforestation' 125). By the

time of *The Lost Road*, however, their ambitions have increased: Herendil says to his father Elendil that Númenóreans desire "to set foot in the far West, and not withdraw it. To conquer new realms for our race, and ease the pressure of this peopled island, where every road is trodden hard and every tree and grass-blade counted…" (*Lost Road* 60). Although at this stage of the legendarium, these imperial desires are depicted as a product of Sauron's malign influence, Tolkien continues to embed them deeper into Númenórean culture and history, so that by the time of the Appendices to *The Lord of the Rings*, Númenor's imperial expansion has been pushed back to the year 1200 of the Second Age, roughly 2000 years before Sauron encounters Ar-Pharazôn and tempts him into invading Valinor.

Alongside this rising engagement with imperialism, Hynes notes an increasing emphasis on its environmental impact: as has been previously discussed, the Númenóreans deforest their own island and the lands of Middle-earth at a "devastating" rate. The specific purposes of this deforestation reinforce the harmful link between imperial conquest and the environment, and the ways in which the environment is rendered – as DeLoughrey and Handley argue – a key victim rather than mere collateral damage of the imperial project. The Númenóreans cut down swathes of forests, both at home and in occupied land, in order to harvest timber for their ships, so that the trees and their wood directly facilitate the further expansion of the empire that seeks to damage them. Aldarion who – as discussed in the second chapter – precipitates this

deforestation, cares nothing for the trees for their own sake: in an argument with his father after one of his voyages where he returns with two new ships built, and further ships laden with timber, he claims, "[t]he work of forestry I took up, and I have been prudent in it; there will be more timber in Númenor ere my day ends than there is under your sceptre…" (*Unfinished Tales* 180). Here, Aldarion refers to trees as timber, and deforestation as forestry; his language not only reveals his utilitarian approach to the natural world, but demonstrates how his entire perspective is framed and indeed blinded by his imperialist ambitions.

Much as imperial mapping seeks to rewrite previous lands and boundaries, these imperialist ambitions rewrite the very landscape of the natural world: the Númenóreans "denud[e]" the lands of Lond Daer, driving "great tracks and roads into the forests northwards and southwards from the Gwathló…" (*Unfinished Tales* 262), while in Númenor itself, the land vacillates between being deforested with no thought of replanting, to "new woods set to grow where there was room" (*Unfinished Tales* 190), according to Aldarion's mood. Crucially, this connection between imperialism and degradation – both the environmental degradation and the moral degradation of the Númenóreans – is laid firmly at the feet of the Númenóreans. Hoiem argues that

> [u]nlike the familiar *Heart of Darkness* degeneration motif, corruption is refreshingly unconnected to contact with colonial Other. Decline directly results from a cultural shift in how we assign value to things. In Tolkien's tales, colonization inevitably commodifies personal and natural

> resources and justifies questionable actions in pursuit of the dream of progress. (77)

The Númenóreans' inability to assign value to the natural world for its own sake and the ensuing violence with which they treat it, leads to their inevitable moral and social decline. As Hoiem notes, rather than correlating this corruption with an encounter with the primitive Other, Tolkien frames it as a product of the Númenóreans' imperial ambitions in order to locate the blame within the imperialist project itself, and to demonstrate how this practice victimises both the land and its inhabitants. The concept of geographical violence is realised on multiple levels in the Númenórean legends. First, both the land and its peoples are enmeshed in acts of violence, with the land particularly being used both as a pawn to further hurt its inhabitants, and as a victim of environmental damage in its own right. Second, in order to justify the deprivation of the people from their native land, colonial narratives surrounding race are employed that further expose these people to acts of aggression. And third, in both physical and cognitive cartography, the lands and the cultures attached to them are consistently appropriated, erased, and written over. Although there aren't many maps that speak to these tales specifically, Tolkien nevertheless positions cartography within a context that intersects with these issues, and thus reveals the broader power dynamics involved in dominating and policing the land. Although on the surface, Middle-earth maps appear to have little to do with imperialism, they nevertheless exist in a world which is defined by imperialist activity and power relationships over land. These

imperialist narratives can be read in and through the maps, positioning cartography as an inherently political practice that mimics the ways in which imperialism speaks for and over the land and its people.

Conclusion

In “Maps, Knowledge and Power”, J.B. Harley laments that “the particular role of maps, as images with historically specific codes, remains largely undifferentiated from the wider geographical discourse in which they are often embedded”, demanding how “can we make maps "speak" about the social worlds of the past?” (‘Power’ 277). This thesis has demonstrated how it is possible to make maps speak about the socio-political and cultural conditions of fictional worlds, through an acknowledgement of the socially constructed and value-laden imagery of the map, and the political uses it is put to. By placing literary cartography in conversation with critical cartographic theory, as well as broader discourses surrounding power and land such as ecocriticism and postcolonial studies, the ways in which maps articulate and facilitate the power relations discussed in the textual narrative become apparent. Fictional maps have often been understood in relation to the text through their illustrative capacity; my approach complicates this understanding, moving past a purely representational text-image relationship and revealing instead the political enmeshments that simultaneously inform both narrative and map.

As has been demonstrated, knowledge is crucial to the establishment of power structures. Maps, as Harley argues, act as forms of Foucauldian knowledge production, by presenting a means of understanding, interpreting, and navigating the world that can then be used to gain control. This is seen

throughout Tolkien's legendarium both in the ways that he draws on historic methods of knowledge communication in maps, such as the structuring of unknown areas at the edge of the page to mimic medieval conceptualisations of spatiality as examined in the first chapter, and in the ways that maps within the legendarium designate, formalise, and explain the land. The power relations that this enables are then made explicit. The second chapter has demonstrated how the knowledge that the map exemplifies acts as a manifestation of the human/nature hierarchy that has historically been predicated on derationalisation and the subsequent subjugation of nature as argued by Val Plumwood, Robert Pogue Harrison, Greg Garrard and others. This hierarchy then enables various acts of power and control over the natural world that range from the reading of difficult, unwelcoming landscapes in order to successfully traverse them, as conducted by Aragorn and Bilbo, to the explicitly environmentally destructive, such as the mass industrialisation that is implemented after Saruman's corruption and the deforestation of Númenor and Middle-earth during the days of the Númenórean empire. The third chapter has established how maps can counteract the anxieties surrounding time and temporalities, both in terms of the tension between human and non-human scales of time, and the passage of natural time itself by acting as a way of artificially freezing the time and rendering it in human scales. In this case, maps also act as a means of charting and thereby rendering spatial and thus knowable other shifts taking place through time, such as the anthropological degeneration of the Elves in Middle-earth, and their fading into the Undying

Lands. The fourth chapter concerns explicit acts of political power that are exercised over land and territory, and has explicated the ways in which cartography expresses and implements these. Said, Fanon, and Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey all illustrate the ways in which power politics and imperialism simultaneously and deliberately harm both the land and its inhabitants; the threat of political violence is present throughout Middle-earth's cartography, whether through the rewriting of borders and territorial spaces as their political allegiance shifts, or through the absences on the map such as the Drúedain, who are constantly denied and erased from their homeland.

Crucial to understanding these power relations is the tension between the map's attempt at totalising representation and the resistance to mapping displayed by the natural world that Tolkien encodes within his cartography. Employing the generic potentialities of the fantasy genre, Tolkien exaggerates the agency of nature in order to empower the world against the power and control that cartography represents. Caradhras refuses the safe passage that the map promises by causing rock falls to impede trespassers, while the Huorns and Ents move and act with what Plumwood has theorised as "intentionality", thus reconfiguring agency to include the actions of the non-human and refusing the passivity demanded by cartography and the control that it implies. Elsewhere, the map's attempt to freeze time and render legible non-human timescales only works to strip the maps entirely of their power and practicality; the maps in the Númenórean archive are ossified into historic

material that no longer has use beyond the archive, and can only speak to the regret over the passing of time and the loss that this predicates. This resistance to the map's exercise of power does not invalidate critical cartography's emphasis on the innately political nature of maps, or Foucault's framework of inevitable and inescapable power structures; rather, these illustrations of the occasional futility of mapping not only highlight the agency that these power structures seek to quell, but also act as a form of creative protest, where the generic devices of the fantasy genre enable a negation of the dominance of the human world that is otherwise not possible.

The ideas outlined in this study can be developed in three key ways for future scholarship. Firstly, this thesis makes an important contribution to the study of Tolkien's cartography, and there is plenty of grounds for further research in this area. In particular, there exists a corpus of adapted maps briefly touched on in the introduction, amongst them Karen Wynn Fonstad's *The Atlas of Middle-earth*, Barbara Strachey's *Journeys of Frodo*, Pauline Baynes' "Map of Middle-earth", and the digital visualisation LotrProject, which features interactive maps of the first and third Ages of Middle-earth that can be customised to filter places, events, and the journey paths of different characters. A potential line of inquiry would be to consider these maps within the field of adaptation studies. In *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), Linda Hutcheon argues that adaptation is simultaneously both a product and a process; as a product, an adaptation needs to present something new while

still remaining faithful to its original source's key tenets, while as a process, an adaptation needs to evaluate what is worth keeping, and what needs to be changed according to the adaptation's new medium. The adaptations of Tolkien's cartography can be considered within this light: to what extent do they continue to embed the same discourses of power while nevertheless making use of new media? Do these new media enable an alternative yet fundamentally political engagement with structures of power in the broader narrative?

Secondly, this thesis sits within the broader field of Tolkien studies, and contributes new literary perspectives on critiques of environment, colonialism, and race in Tolkien's fiction. Each of these areas could be developed into a broader study of their role in the legendarium, with cartography featuring as only one manifestation of these relations of power. Another potential direction would be the consideration of gender in the legendarium, and its intersection with ideas of environment. There is in particular a striking intersection between trees and women: the Ainu most associated with nature is Yavanna, who creates the Two Trees of Valinor that are later destroyed by the Dark Lord Morgoth; the elf princess Lúthien is first depicted dancing beneath the trees of the forest of Doriath; and as discussed in the second chapter, Erendis, the wife of Aldarion the Mariner, is caught between his love of the sea and shipbuilding and her love of the trees of Númenor. There is thus ample opportunity for ecofeminist readings that consider the ways in which the relationship between

women and trees extends beyond the mere feminisation of nature, and instead demonstrates the simultaneous domination of women and the environment, thereby acting as a response to historically damaging power dynamics in our own world.

Finally, I hope this thesis has made clear the necessity of overlapping critical cartography and geocriticism more broadly with literary studies. There is potential for a study that takes the methodologies and conclusions explored in this thesis and applies them either across a spectrum of fantasy maps, or literary cartography more broadly conceived. It is true that Tolkien's intricate world-building and his large corpus of narrative and posthumously published maps particularly enable this kind of analysis; however, as outlined in the introduction, there exists an extensive corpus of literary cartography even before Tolkien, and as Stefan Ekman has highlighted, almost innumerable maps since, all of which have the potential to be read through this lens. Critical cartography seeks to emphasise the innate political practice of the map; any study of fictional cartography therefore needs to recognise the ways in which, as Denis Wood argues, power constitutes the ability to do work, and the ways in which all maps – even fictional ones – work.

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Image Appendix

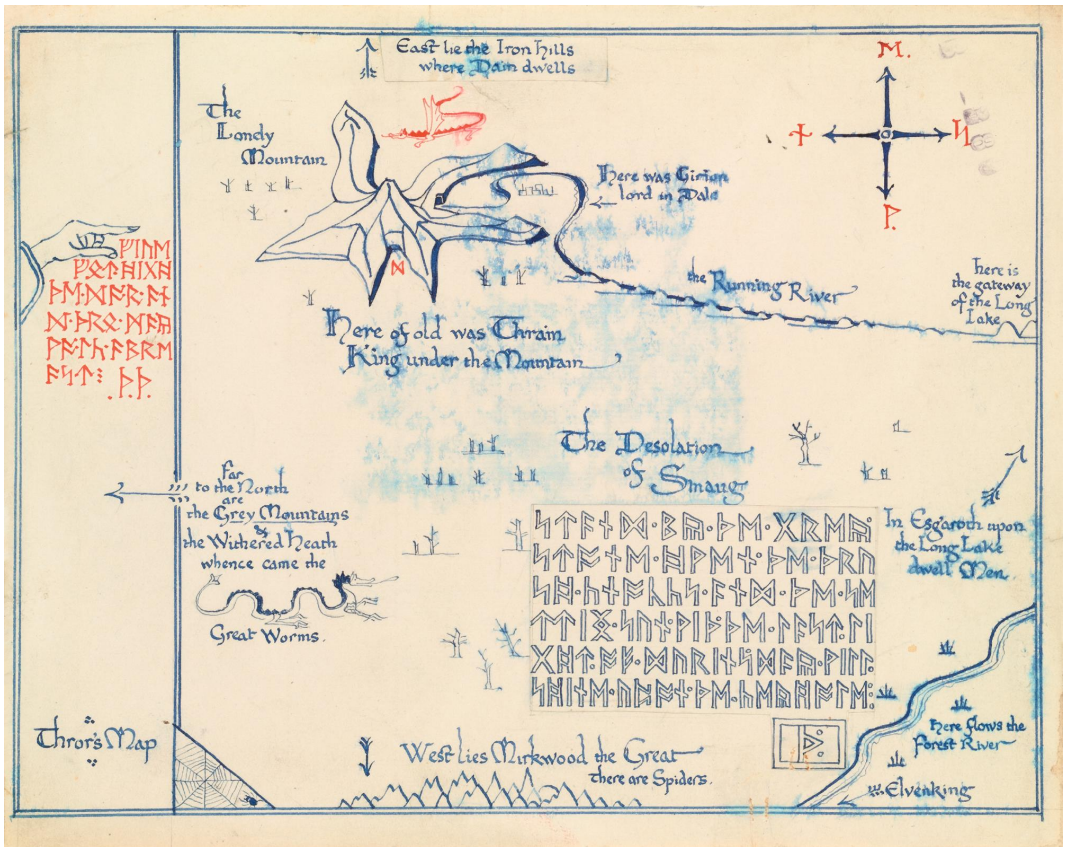


Fig 1. Thror's Map, J.R.R. Tolkien © Tolkien Estate

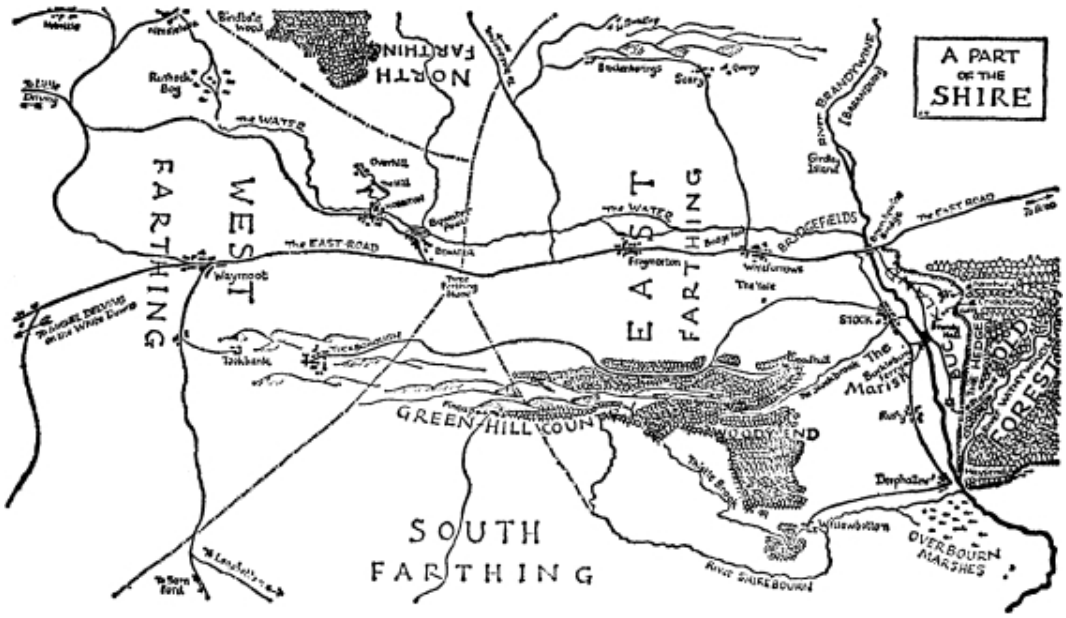


Fig 2. "A Part of the Shire", J.R.R. Tolkien and Christopher Tolkien © Tolkien Estate

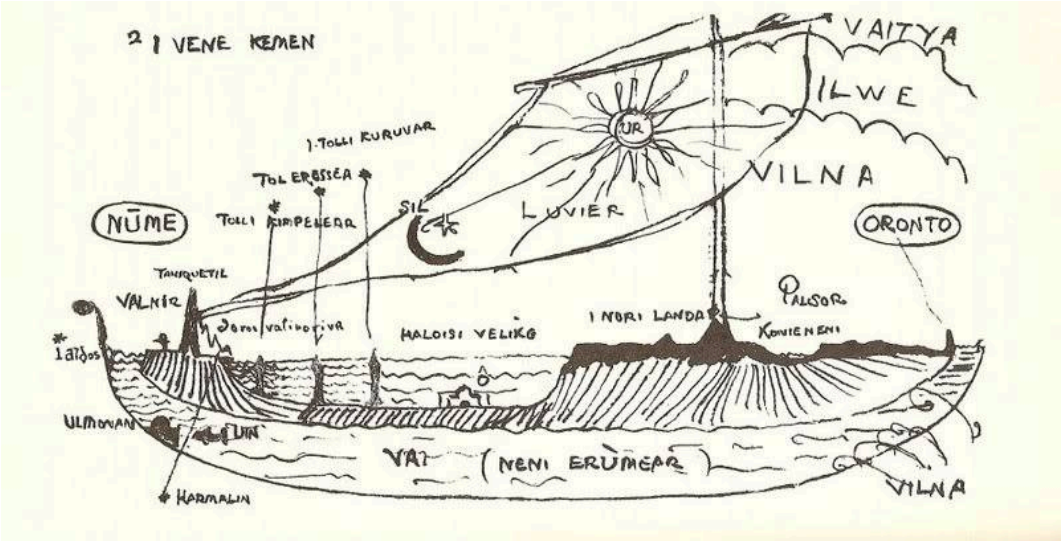
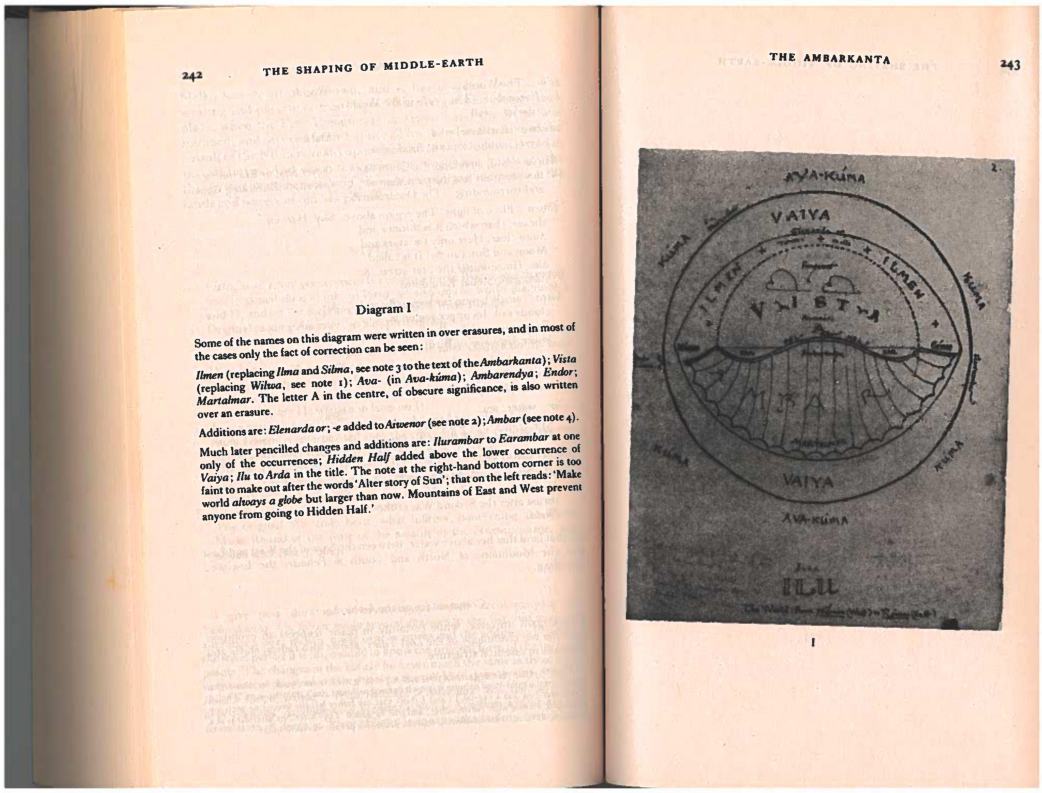


Fig 3. I Vene Kemen, J.R.R. Tolkien © Tolkien Estate



242 THE SHAPING OF MIDDLE-EARTH

Diagram I

Some of the names on this diagram were written in over erasures, and in most of the cases only the fact of correction can be seen:

Ilmen (replacing *Ilma* and *Silma*, see note 3 to the text of the *Ambarkanta*); *Vista* (replacing *Wilwa*, see note 1); *Ava-* (in *Ava-kúma*); *Ambarendya*; *Endor*; *Martalmar*. The letter A in the centre, of obscure significance, is also written over an erasure.

Additions are: *Elenarda or*; *-e* added to *Arwenor* (see note 2); *Ambar* (see note 4).

Much later pencilled changes and additions are: *Ilurambar* to *Earambar* at one only of the occurrences; *Hidden Half* added above the lower occurrence of *Vaiya*; *Ilu* to *Arda* in the title. The note at the right-hand bottom corner is too faint to make out after the words 'Alter story of Sun'; that on the left reads: 'Make world *altways a globe* but larger than now. Mountains of East and West prevent anyone from going to Hidden Half.'

THE AMBARKANTA 243

1

Fig 4. Ambarkanta Diagram I, J.R.R. Tolkien © Tolkien Estate

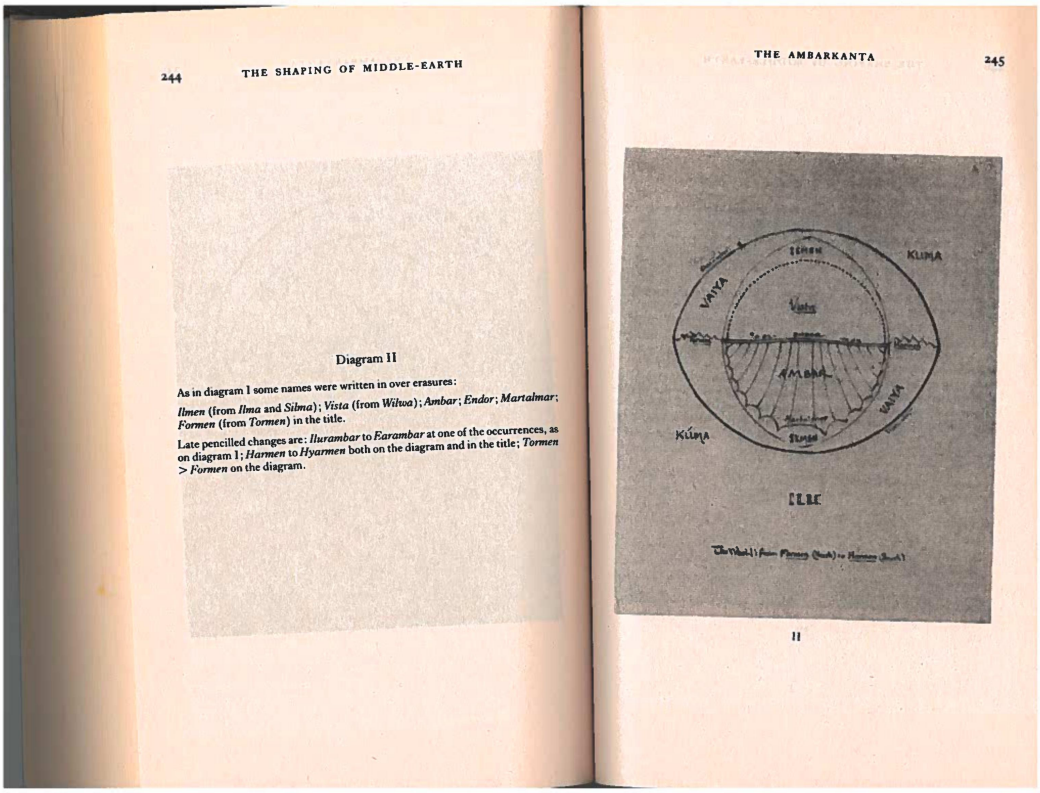


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Diagram II

As in diagram I some names were written in over erasures: *Ilmen* (from *Ilma* and *Silma*); *Vista* (from *Wiltwa*); *Ambar*; *Endor*; *Martalmar*; *Formen* (from *Tormen*) in the title.

Late pencilled changes are: *Ilurambar* to *Earambar* at one of the occurrences, as on diagram I; *Harmen* to *Hyarmen* both on the diagram and in the title; *Tormen* > *Formen* on the diagram.

THE AMBARKANTA 245

II

Fig 5. Ambarkanta Diagram II, J.R.R. Tolkien © Tolkien Estate

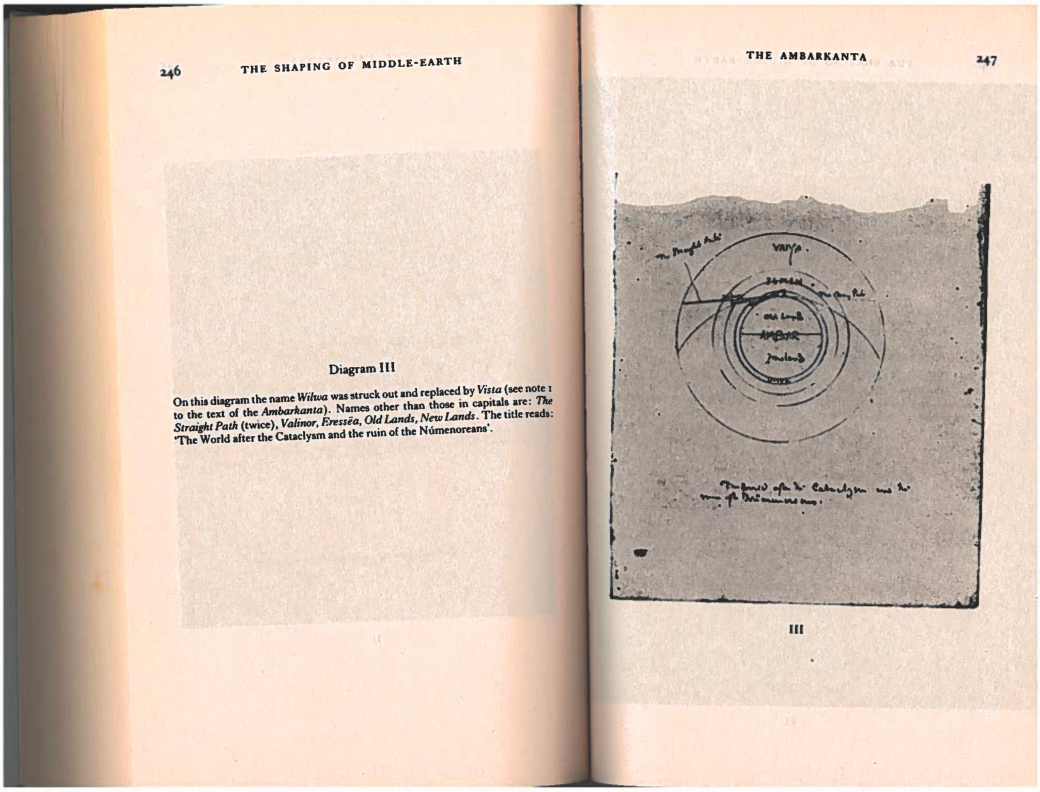

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Diagram III

On this diagram the name *Wiltwa* was struck out and replaced by *Vista* (see note 1 to the text of the *Ambarkanta*). Names other than those in capitals are: *The Straight Path* (twice), *Valinor*, *Eressëa*, *Old Lands*, *New Lands*. The title reads: 'The World after the Cataclysm and the ruin of the Númenoreans'.

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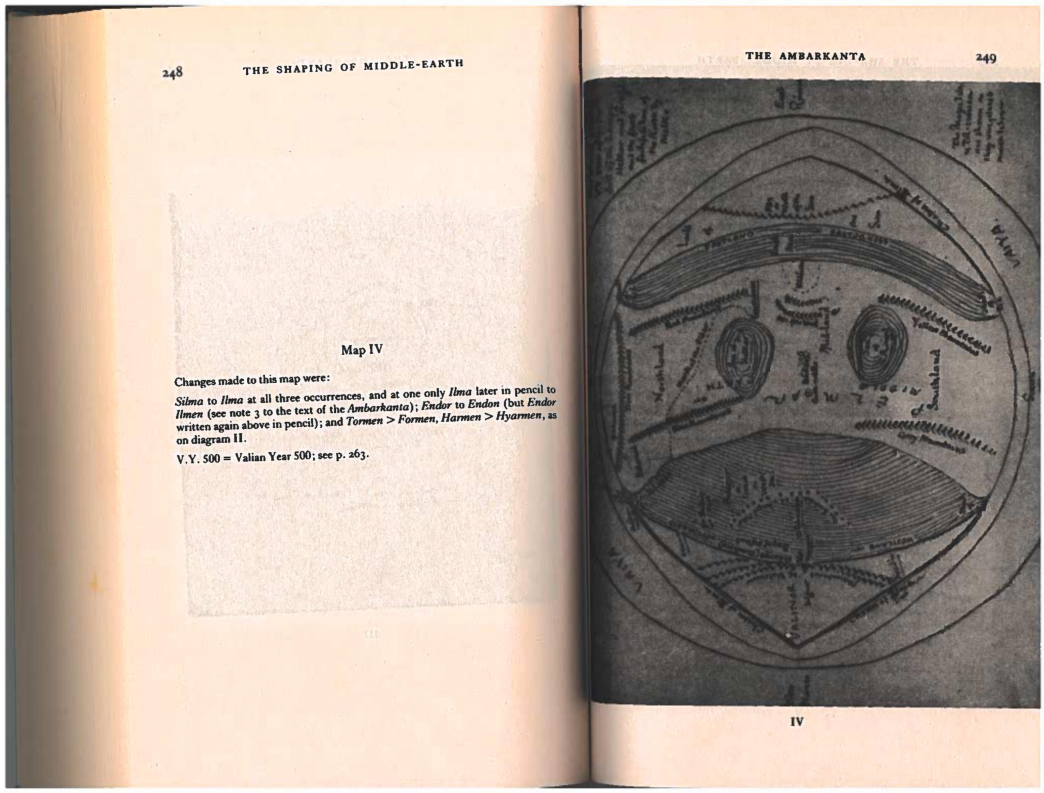
III

Fig 6. Ambarkanta Diagram III, J.R.R. Tolkien © Tolkien Estate



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Map IV

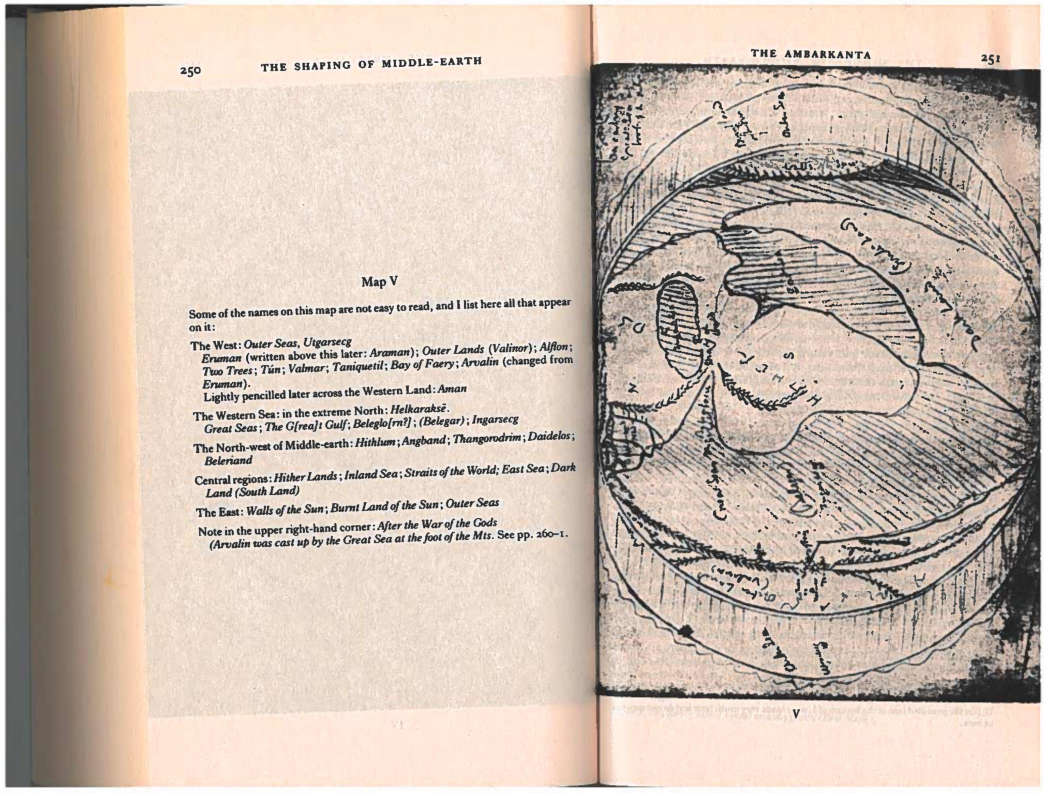
Changes made to this map were:

Silma to *Ilma* at all three occurrences, and at one only *Ilma* later in pencil to *Ilmen* (see note 3 to the text of the *Ambarkanta*); *Endor* to *Endon* (but *Endor* written again above in pencil); and *Tormen* > *Formen*, *Harmen* > *Hyarmen*, as on diagram II.

V.Y. 500 = Valian Year 500; see p. 263.

IV

Fig 7. Ambarkanta Map IV, J.R.R. Tolkien © Tolkien Estate



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Map V

Some of the names on this map are not easy to read, and I list here all that appear on it:

The West: *Outer Seas*, *Utgarsecg*
Eruman (written above this later: *Araman*); *Outer Lands* (*Valinor*); *Alfion*; *Two Trees*; *Tún*; *Valmar*; *Taniquetil*; *Bay of Faery*; *Arvalin* (changed from *Eruman*).
Lightly pencilled later across the Western Land: *Aman*

The Western Sea: in the extreme North: *Helkaraksë*.
Great Seas; *The G[rea]t Gulf*; *Beleglo[rni?]*; (*Belegar*); *Ingarsecg*

The North-west of Middle-earth: *Hithlum*; *Angband*; *Thangorodrim*; *Daidelos*; *Beleriand*

Central regions: *Hither Lands*; *Inland Sea*; *Straits of the World*; *East Sea*; *Dark Land* (*South Land*)

The East: *Walls of the Sun*; *Burnt Land of the Sun*; *Outer Seas*

Note in the upper right-hand corner: *After the War of the Gods*
(*Arvalin was cast up by the Great Sea at the foot of the Mts*. See pp. 260–1.

V

Fig 8. Ambarkanta Map V, J.R.R. Tolkien © Tolkien Estate

Fig 9. The Middle-earth map, J.R.R. Tolkien and Christopher Tolkien © Tolkien Estate

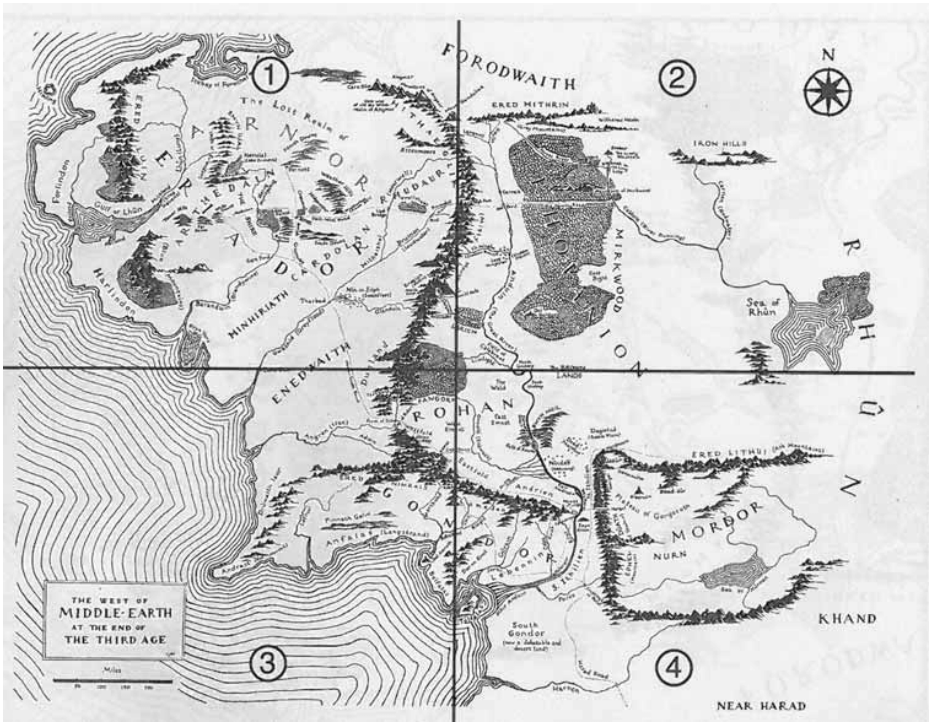

Fig 10. “The West of Middle-earth at the End of the Third Age”, J.R.R. Tolkien and Christopher Tolkien © Tolkien Estate

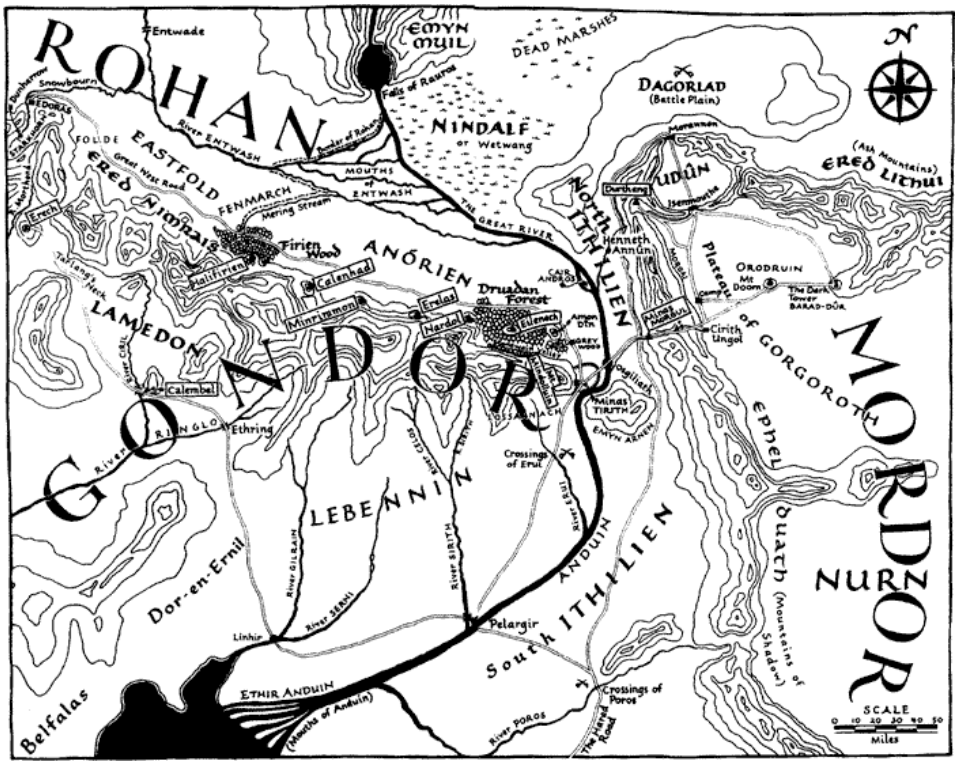

Fig 11. Map of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor, J.R.R. Tolkien and Christopher Tolkien © Tolkien Estate

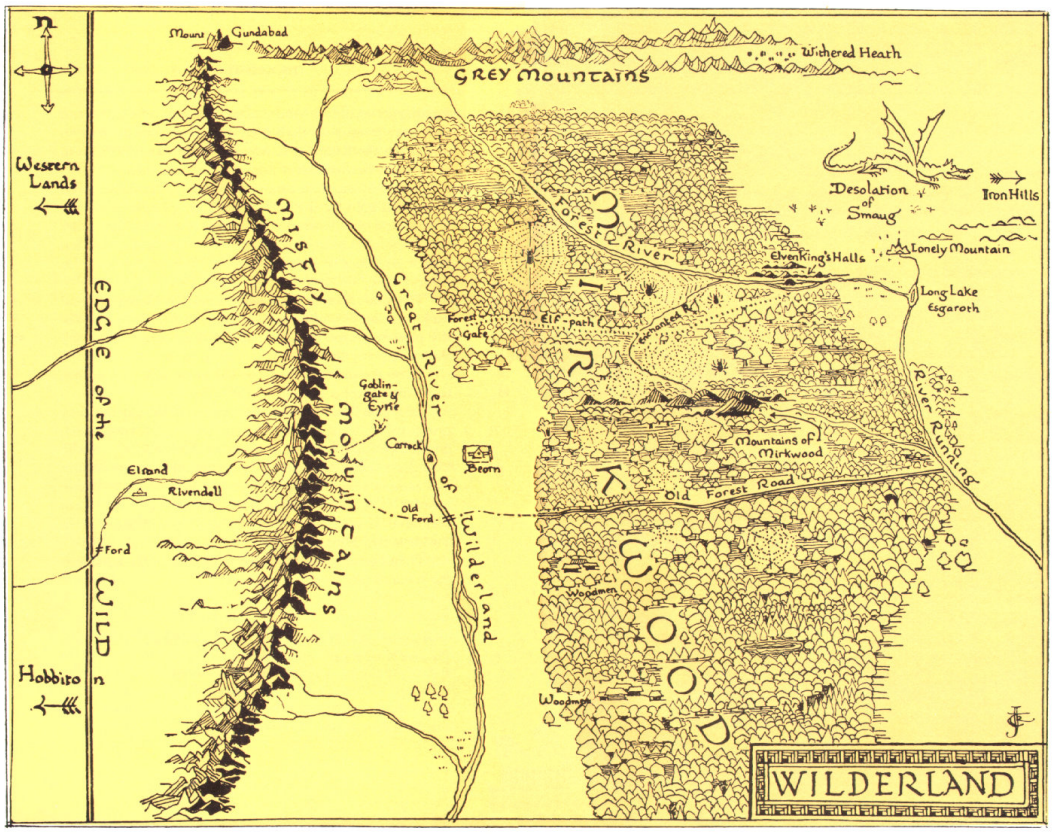

Fig 12. Wilderland map, J.R.R. Tolkien © Tolkien Estate

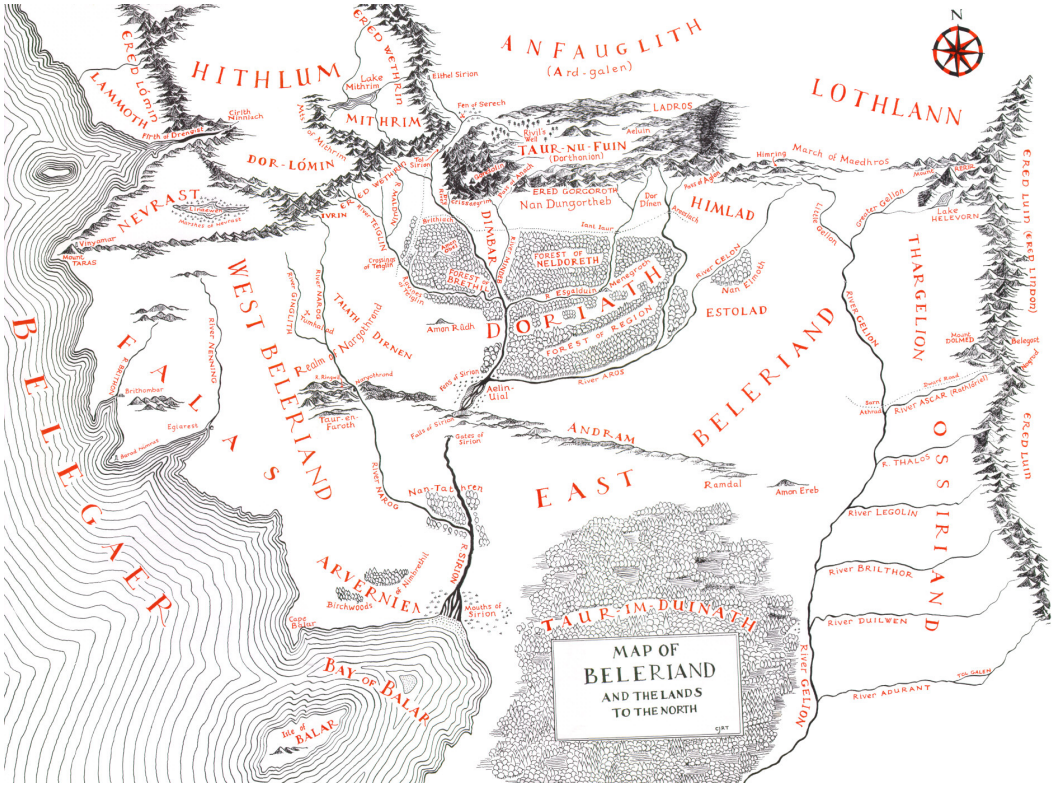

Fig 13. Map of Beleriand, J.R.R. Tolkien and Christopher Tolkien © Tolkien Estate

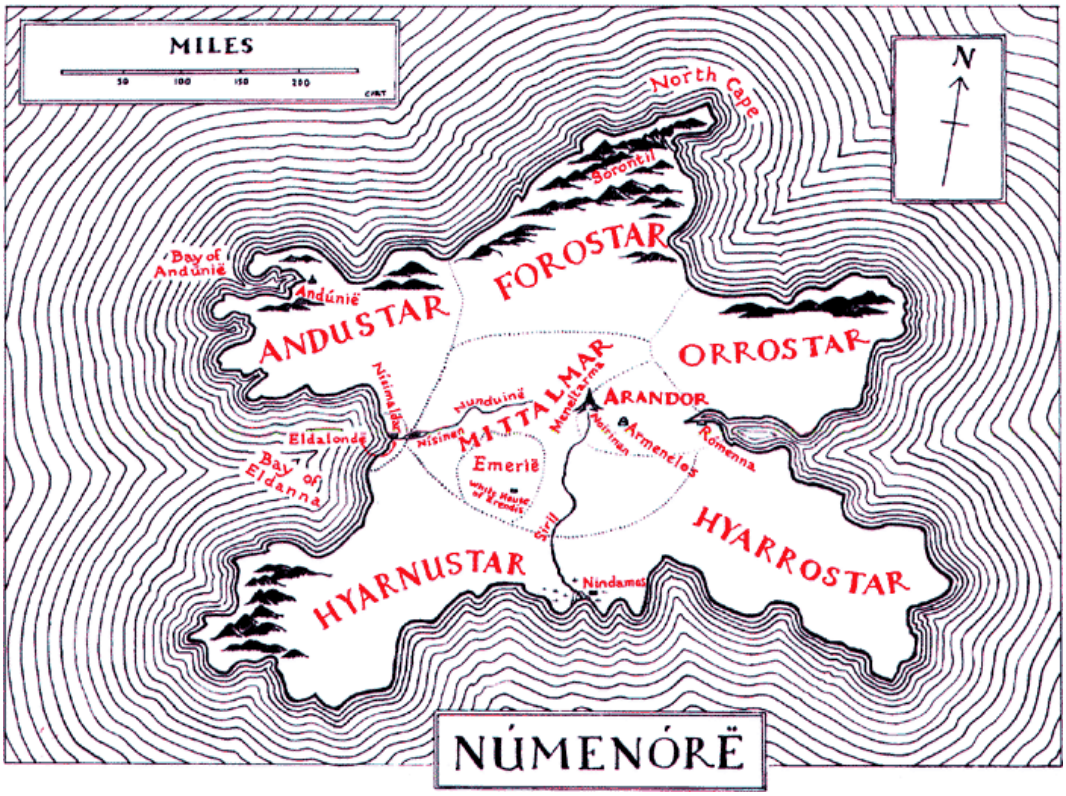

Fig 14. Map of Númenor, J.R.R. Tolkien and Christopher Tolkien © Tolkien Estate